# DISCOURS
Thos OF
# CONFESSION
TO A
# Lawful Priest
Wherein is treated of the Last
# Judgement.

---

By *PETER MANBY*
Dean of *London-Derry*.

---

*Eripe Animam meam, Deus [illegible]*
*hominibus è terra, quorum [illegible]*
*est in [illegible] Vita, quorum [illegible]*
*imples [illegible] Thes[illegible]*
Psalm. [illegible] *V*[illegible]
Tremel.

---

[illegible] *DON*,
Prin[illegible] the Author [illegible]

BCL. A3132

# PREFACE TO THE READER.

Reader,

IT *hath been obſerv'd long ſince by the Lord* Bacon, *that* Diſſenters Sermons (*conſidering the* Accent *wherewith they are utter'd,*) *are ſometimes very Powerful to drive Sinners to the Queſtion,* What ſhall we do to be Sav'd? *But ſeldom or never tell us what.*

*His meaning was this, general Diſcourſes of* getting Holineſs, *and* getting an Intereſt in Chriſt *ſignifie little, but to amuſe the Hearers; to raiſe their Scruples or Apprehenſions for the preſent, and then leave every man to be his own* Confeſſor *or* Guide *of his way to Heaven.*

*A certain Phyſician viſiting his Patient, left him this* Receit *for his Health,* Sume Herbam neſcio quam, contra morbum neſcio quem, & ſanaberis neſcis quando. *Diſſenters* preaching *ſeems juſt ſuch a Receipt for the Cure of Souls. The whole Myſtery*

of

*of it*, (*says* Sir Roger L'Estrange,) *is wrapt up in* Sounds *and* Generalities, *to catch the People by the Ears, without any meaning in the World beyond Amusement and Imposture.*

*I have been sometimes no negligent Hearer of it, and did observe therein sundry Vices, which I shall here set down, to let the deluded* People *see how much they have been abus'd.*

1. *They do not teach the* Christian Religion *under its proper Heads, which are the Articles of the* Creed, *the* Lords Prayer, *the* Ten Commandments;

*and the* Sacraments; *but handle it in confuſion, and mingle it with their own Opinions, and multiply words, whereby it comes to paſs, that the People* are ever Learning, and never able to come to the leaſt knowledge of the Truth.

2. *They pretend much to the* Scripture, *yet do not inſtruct us after the pattern of our Saviour,* Mat. 5. *and ſeldom put us in mind of this Natural and Chriſtian Precept.* Whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do unto you, do ye even the ſame to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. *Indeed their*

*their buſineſs commonly, is not to perſwade the Love of God and our Neighbour, but to inſinuate after a cunning manner their jealouſy of their preſent* times. *Read all their Books,* (Baxter *himſelf*) *and where ſhall you find any thing ſo material or devout as* The whole Duty of Man, Kempis *of the Imitation of Chriſt*, Drexelius *of Eternity*, *St.* Auſtin's *Confeſſions*, &c.

3. By *their Ignorant and indiſcreet declamations againſt* Superſtition, *never informing the people the Scriptural and true meaning of that* Word,

*they have preach'd them into Darkneſs and Confuſion; inſinuating as if Superſtition imported nothing elſe, but a Worſhiping the true God after a manner unprescrib'd by his* Word; *by an unprescrib'd manner, (meaning all other* Modes *except their own.) And a man would gladly ſee that* Chapter *or* Text *in the* Bible, *where the manner of their* Worſhip *is prescrib'd, where every Miniſter is requir'd to ſerve God with Prayers of his own Conception.*

4. *Their common* Top-picks *for entertaining the People are theſe,* viz. Priviledges

viſedges of Saints, Goſpel-Ordinances, 12 Signs of Election; *So ordering the matter, as to cut the broad and narrow way both into one, that a man may go to* Heaven *and* Hell *the ſame way*; *the* Down-fall of Antichriſt, Sufferings of the Godly, *&c. Things very pleaſing to a* Trading *People, as not medling with their Natural Vices of* Schiſm, Sedition, Sacriledge, Deceit, Pride, Envy *and* Malice, *&c. Seldom or never a word of our* Obligations *to the* Fifth Commandment, *nor to the* Eighth, *of* Reſtitution of ill-gotten Money or

Eſtates, *by which means (ſaith one) they had brought into Faſhion a* Religion *without Morality, and* Grace *without good Nature.*

5. *You may read their Books and Sermons till Doomſday, before they give you any underſtanding of this Article of your Creed,* I believe one Holy Catholick and Apoſtolick Church; *How greatly ſoever it concerns us to be inform'd of this Truth, that whoſoever lives and dies out of the unity of the* Catholick Church, *lives and dies out of the Ordinary way to Salvation. Can*

*the*

*the most healing* Salves *signifie any thing to a broken Limb without setting it right? or the most popular Sermons to a* Dissenter, *without returning to the Unity of the Church? Is any Doctrine pertinent to his condition, but that which adviseth him to return whence he is gone astray? How can they live in Unity that abhor all Community of Divine Service and Sacraments with all the Christian Churches of the World except themselves? As if the Divine Goodness had left all the World in Darkness but themselves. 'Tis a dreadful*

*ful thing to conſider how they have cut themſelves off from the Communion of all other Chriſtians, that they may ſtand upon their own ſingle bottom. And they expound the Propheſie of* Daniel, *the* Revelation, *the ſecond Epiſtle to the* Theſſalonians, *and other obſcure places of Scripture to juſtifie their Schiſm; perverting and forcing the Word of God, to make it ſpeak what they liſt.*

*Thus, when St.* Paul *ſpeaks of weak and beggarly Rudiments, they underſtand the Ceremonies of the* Church; *when St.* John *ſays,* Come out of *Baby-*

*lon*

*lon*, my People, *He means Prelacy and Common Prayer*: *By the Locuſts which came out of the bottomleſs pit*, (*they ſay*) *are meant Arch-biſhops, and Biſhops, Deans, and Arch-Deacons, Monks and Fryers, whom they look upon as limbs of Antichriſt. The Murder of the bleſſed King* Charles I. *they juſtifi'd out of the little Horn in* Daniel, *and from the* Beaſt *and red* Dragon *in the* Revelations.

*And as for the common ordinary People, though they will acknowledge our Miniſters to have* (*as* the Author of the Friendly De-

Debate *obſerves,*) *more Humane Learning than themſelves; yet they will ſignifie by the ſhaking of their Heads, how much they pity our Ignorance of the Mind of God. From the Churches Authority, they will appeal to* Scripture; *and that is to be interpreted by the* Spirit; *and That Spirit is in themſelves alone.*

*All which, when a man ſeriouſly conſiders, he cannot but wiſh, that as there are Laws ſevere enough againſt thoſe that counterfeit and corrupt the Kings Coyn, there were alſo a Law againſt ſuch as abuſe*

*and*

*and corrupt the Holy Scriptures.*

*But when you tell them of* Schism, *the Question is (say they) who are the Schismaticks? Not themselves, but the present establish'd Church, that has given so just cause for their Separation. The common pretext of all the Phanaticks in the World, to break the unity of the Church upon suppos'd Errors and* Superstitions, *whereof they make themselves Judges, and Parties. Every thing they do not fancy must be a just occasion of Dissent. And truly, if every mans own Reason must be Judge in*

*the*

*the caſe, or the* Scripture *interpreted by every mans Reaſon, you ſhall never find any Body in the wrong. Thus the ſub-divided partie of* Presbyterians, Independents, Anabaptiſts, Millenaries, &c. *juſtifie their ſeperate Meetings one from another, Impeaching one another more or leſs of* Popery *and* Superſtition. *The* Baptiſm of Infants, Churching of Women, asking our Parents Bleſſing, *are Relicks of* Popery (*ſay the* Baptiſts,) *no leſs than the* Surplice *or* Common Prayer Book.

*But when we conſider ſeriouſly the* Scriptures, *and eſpe-*

*especially the Epistles of St.* Paul, *we find the* Church *(wheresoever dispersed over the face of the Earth) is, or ought to be but one Body or Society of men; (for by one Spirit we are all Baptiz'd into one* Body, *saith St.* Paul,) *and that the renting asunder of this Body; and setting up Altar against Altar, is a Sin that no pretence in the World can excuse; for this* Church *being founded on the Promise of Christ,* [that the Gates of Hell shall never prevail against her] *is secure from fundamental Errors; and therefore* there can be no just

neceſſity (*ſaith St.* Auſtin) to break the Unity of the Catholick Church.

*Upon the whole matter, all the Preaching of* Diſſenters *ſeems to me to tend to no Virtue or* Goodneſs, *but is a* maze *of words, out of which the People can never find the way to the true Church, or true Religion.*

*I can only ſay, that I hope the Reader, by that time he has read over this little Treatiſe, will find I have endeavour'd to avoid thoſe Vices which I charge upon their Doctrine. But I expect to meet with various Cenſures. The Phanaticks*

*naticks (ſay ſome) will be apt to take occaſion from this Diſcourſe of* Confeſſion, *to ſpeak evil of the* eſtabliſh'd Church. *I anſwer, Have we not ſeen enough of the miſtaken policy of humouring that ſort of People, who count every thing* Popery *that is taught or practis'd in the Church of* Rome? Who promote the Intereſt of *Rome* (*ſaith the worthy Biſhop* Sanderſon,) by oppoſing it with more Violence than Reaſon. Preface to his Serm. Sect. 17.

*Let us never expect they will give over their Song of* Popery *and* Re-

formation *before the* high places *of Crown and Church Lands be taken away.*

*But to prevent this objection of* Popery, *I have set down in the first place the words of the Church of* England. 2. *The Judgements of the most Learned* Protestant Divines, *Primate* Usher, *Bishop* Taylor, Mr. Richard Hooker, Dr. Hammond. 3. *The Confessions of the Reformed Churches of* Germany. 4. *The Practice of the present* Greek *and* Armenian *Churches.* 5. *The Precepts and Examples of Holy Scripture; enough,*

# To the Reader.

*I hope, to convince any good man, that the* Cure of Souls *requires* Confession *and* Sacerdotal Absolution, *no less than* Preaching.

*In short, (Reader,) if this Book have any force or tendency to promote Virtue or the Fear of God, I value not what* Diffenters *or* Trimmers *say of it.*

Farewell.

---

# A BRIEF DISCOURSE Of the Laſt JUDGEMENT, &c.

THe Laſt Judgement is a *Common-place* which contains theſe four general Heads.

1. The certainty of that day.

2. Its Dreadfulneſs.

3. The *Perſon* that ſhall be Judge.

4. The

4. The Neceſſity of providing for it while Time is preſent with us.

1. The certainty of that Day. 'Tis an Article of our *Creed*; and though many Reaſons may be given for the Articles of our *Faith*, yet there is but one Infallible Reaſon to depend upon, and that is *Divine Revelation*, the Veracity of God Himſelf: He cannot err, but our own Reaſons do deceive us very often. He hath ſaid it, and 'tis enough: *It's appointed unto all men once to die; and after this, the Judgment*, Heb. 9. 27. *God*

*ſhall*

*shall bring every work unto Judgement, with every secret thing whether it be good or bad*, Eccles. 12.14. The Holy Scripture delivers it so frequently and plainly, to leave all men un-excusable who forget it.

2. Next to *Divine Revelation*, we have the Universal Consent of the whole World, (very few excepted) confessing this Truth. *I believe in God, and the Day of Judgement*, are words very often repeated in the *Alcoran* of the *Turks*: And the *Spaniards*, at their first Invasion of *America*, found a

Belief of it amongst the *Savages* themselves. The Antient *Pagans* did generally subscribe to it: For *Lactantius*, (a Father well read in their Books and Writings,) tells us out of them, that, not only the *Sybils*, but *Mercurius Trismegistus* was of this perswasion.

That there shall be a Day of final *Retribution*, hath appear'd so equitable to mankind, that by Natural Instinct they have concluded it necessary.

3. 'Tis evident from the consideration of the Divine Justice: For although the Affairs of this present

preſent World lie under the conduct of Providence, yet there appears ſometimes no equal Diſtribution of things; But as if ſome men were puniſhed for their Virtues, and others Rewarded for their Wickedneſs. *Job* is ſpoil'd of his Goods; *John Baptiſt* is Beheaded; and the Innocent Lamb of God condemn'd and Crucifi'd as a Malefactor: In this life, *The Race is not to the ſwift, nor the Battle to the ſtrong, nor Favour to men of skill, nor yet Bread to the wiſe, but Time and Chance happens to all.* How many live

and die without any remorſe in the poſſeſſion of that Eſtate, or Wealth which they have acquir'd by Fraud, by Sacriledge or Violence? He is counted but a weak man, who dares not ſtrain a point of Conſcience to ſerve his Intereſt. And beſides, conſider the uncertainty and in-ſufficiency of all Humane Juſtice, that (not to mention its lyableneſs to Partiality, Prejudice or Intereſt,) muſt pronounce according to Evidence, not knowing whether that *Evidence* be True or Falſe. The late *Fanatical* Conſpiracy, (though ſufficiently

ficiently attested,) might have found but too many *Unbelievers*, had not the power of a guilty Conscience over-rul'd the Conspirators themselves, to confess the *Fact*. All Justice depends on the Veracity of the Witness; and that is sometimes so invisible, or uncertain, to to all, but God, and his own Conscience, that there seems to be a kind of *Lottery* in all Humane Judicature, *I saw under the Sun the place of Judgement, that Wickedness was there, and the place of Righteousness, that Iniquity was there; then I*

*ſaid in my heart, God ſhall Judge the Righteous, and the wicked*, Eccleſ. 3. 16.

There is ſometimes no proportion betwixt the Crime, and the Puniſhment. To inſtance that of *Perjury*; whereof though a man be fairly convicted by our Laws, the Penalty is ſlight in compariſon of the Miſchief he has done.

How many hardſhips muſt the poor man ſuffer at the hands of his Neighbour, that is ſtronger than He, for which no humane Juſtice has provided, nor can provide any Remedy? But God is juſt: And therefore, we muſt con-

conclude, that ſomewhere or other Innocence ſhall be remembred, and Oppreſſion ſhall be puniſh'd: This conſideration may oblige us to poſſeſs our Souls with content and Patience, to expect that *Equity* ſomewhere elſe, which this *World* cannot give.

In this life the Providence of God is pleas'd ſo to order the matter, as not preſently to render unto every man according to his Deeds. God is ſtrong and patient, and is provok'd every day. *The Tabernacles of the Robbers proſper*, ſaid *Job*; *They*

*come to no misfortune like other folk*, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*, who was ſurpriz'd at the contemplation of it. *As for Me*, (ſaith he,) *my feet were almoſt gone; my ſteps had well nigh ſlipt, when I ſaw the proſperity of the wicked.* He underſtood it not. *Verily, I have cleans'd my heart in vain, and waſh'd my Hands in Innocency*, Pſal. 73. Yet upon further conſideration, he is ſatisfi'd, that God did ſet them in ſlippery places, but it was only to caſt them down; And that at laſt for all their imaginary Glories, they ſhould periſh, and be brought

brought to a fearful end.

This is further repreſented unto us in the parable of *Dives* and *Lazarus*, wherein *Abraham* thus expreſſes the Order of Gods Providence; *Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedſt thy good things, and* Lazarus *evil things; But now He is comforted, and Thou art tormented.*

Some ſinners are met with in this preſent life, that their Fates may be exemplary to others; that we may not think the Divine *Juſtice* aſleep, nor ſay with thoſe in the *Pſalmiſt*, *Tuſh, God cares not*

*for*

*for it, neither is there Knowledge in the most High.* Others (and that the far greater number) he reſerves to receive according to their Deeds in another life.

Among the Attributes of God there are only Three whereof we are capable to underſtand any thing; his *Power*, his *Goodneſs* and his *Juſtice*: His *Power* is apparent in the *Creation of the World*; his *Goodneſs* in the *Redemption* and *Preſervation* of it; his perfect *Juſtice* remains to be manifeſted at the great day of Retribution. And thus the

the Juſtice and Righteouſneſs of God does require another Tribunal, whence every man ſhall be ſent to his proper place, to receive that doom that of right belongs unto him.

And ſo much for the firſt general Head, the *Certainty of that day*, from theſe three conſiderations.

1. It is an Article of our Creed.

2. From the univerſal Conſent of the World, (very few excepted.)

3. From the conſideration of Gods Juſtice.

The

The second Head is the Dreadfulness of that day. This I must represent in the words of the Holy Scripture; where we shall find.

1. The manner of our Saviours coming.

2. The strict and Impartial Tryal that shall pass upon all Men.

3. The unalterableness of the Sentence, and Eternity of the Rewards and Punishments.

1. The manner of our Saviour's coming. If God thought fit to deliver his Laws from *Mount Sinai*, with such circumstances as made the *Israelites* tremble;

tremble, with what Signs will he give notice of his ſecond coming, to require an account for all the Contempts and Violations of that Law? *The Sun ſhall be darkned* (ſaith our Saviour) *and the Moon ſhall not give her Light: And upon the Earth diſtreſs of Nations with perplexity; mens Hearts failing them for Fear, and for looking after theſe things which are coming on the Earth; for the Powers of Heaven ſhall be ſhaken.* Luke. 21. 26.

A ſudden and unexpected Eclipſe of the Sun at noon-day were enough

to ſurpriſe all the World with Confuſion and Melancholly.

The conſternation ſhall be ſuch, that *the Kings of the Earth and the mighty men, and the rich men,* (ſaith St. *John*) *and every bond-man, and every free-man ſhall hide themſelves in Dens, and in the Rocks of the Mountains; and ſay to the Mountains and the Rocks; fall on us, and hide us from the Face of him that ſits on the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his Wrath is come; and who ſhall be able to ſtand,* Revel. 6. 15.

And

And further, *in thoſe days ſhall men ſeek Death, and ſhall not find it, and ſhall deſire to die, and Death ſhall flee from them,* Revel. 9. 6.

Then the Moon ſhall be confounded, and the Sun aſham'd (as the Prophet ſpeaks) to diſpenſe their Light any longer to ſenſeleſs and unworthy men: Then the wicked repenting & groaning for anguiſh of Spirit ſhall ſay within themſelves, *Wiſd.* 5. 8, 9, 10. *What hath Pride profited us? Or what good hath Riches with our vaunting brought us? All thoſe things being paſs'd a-*

*way.*

*way like a ſhadow, and as a Poſt that paſſes by: Or as a Ship that paſſes over the waves of the water, which, when it is gone by, the trace thereof cannot be found. For the hope of the ungodly is like duſt that is blown away with the wind; but the Righteous live for ever; their reward alſo is with the Lord, and the care of them is with the moſt High*, v. 14, 15.

Agreeably to this, Saint *Paul* ſtiles it, the Day of *Wrath*, Rom. 2. 5. *Deſpiſeſt thou the Riches of Gods Goodneſs and Forbearance? But after thy Hardneſs and Impenitent heart,*

*heart, treaſureſt up unto thy ſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath.* It is call'd the day of Wrath, becauſe the day of *Grace* and *Pardon* will then be paſt.

2. It will be a day of Terrour, by reaſon of the ſtrict and impartial Tryal that ſhall paſs upon all men; not only for the Evil they have done, but for the Good which they have left undone, according to the opportunities and abilities which they have had.

What is more venial (one would think) than an idle word? And yet our Saviour pronounces,

that *for every idle word which men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give an account in the day of Judgement*, Mat. 12. 36.

Of idle words the H. Scripture mentions ſeveral ſorts, as Back-biting, Whiſpering, Tale-bearing, Lying, Diſſembling, bearing Falſe-Witneſs againſt our Neighbour; all which are breaches of of the ſecond Table.

And not only our Words, but our Thoughts ſhall be Arraign'd at that Tribunal. *For the Lord ſhall bring to light the hidden things of Darkneſs, and make manifeſt the coun-*

*councels of the Hearts*, 1 Cor. 4. 5. The Thoughts of our Hearts which have had our Consent and Approbation, but for want of Opportunity could not be acted by us: Therefore it is that St. *Paul* calls them the *Councils* of our Hearts. It is just with God to call us to an account for them: The Thief, the Adulterer, or the Rebel being nevertheless Criminal, though missing their *Design* for want of an opportunity.

Let a man imagine how much should he be concern'd, were all his secret Vices and Works

of Darkneſs to be expos'd and publiſh'd before an *Aſſizes* here; and then let him eſtimate that publick Diſgrace that Impenitent Sinners ſhall undergo at the laſt Judgement. *Thou didſt it ſecretly*, (ſaid the Prophet *Nathan* to *David*,) *but I will do this thing before all* Iſrael, *and before the Sun*, 2 Sam. 12. Thoſe Vices that now (like Letters written with the juice of Lemmons) conceal themſelves from the eyes of men, ſhall by the fire of that Judgement appear legible to all the World. *When thou ſaweſt a Thief, thou*

*thou consentedst unto him; and hast been partaker with the Adulterers; thou gavst thy Mouth to speak evil, and thy Tongue to frame Deceit; thou satst and spakst against thy Brother; These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtst that I was altogether such a one as thy self; but I will reprove thee, and set these things in order before thee.*

3. Consider the irreversibleness of the Sentence, and *Eternity* of the Rewards and Punishments. Remember, there was no body to intercede for the foolish *Virgins*, once

once excluded from the Marriage; nor yet for the unprofitable Servant that neglected his Talent: They repented doubtleſs, and that bitterly too, but it was too late; *Afterwards came alſo the fooliſh Virgins, ſaying, Lord, open to us; but he anſwer'd, and ſaid, verily I know you not*, Mat. 25. 12.

As for the Eternity of the Rewards and Puniſhments, I ſhall only mind you, that if a Feaver of three days continuance be ſo uneaſie, what ſhall we apprehend of the *Worm* that never dies, and

and the *Fire* that never ſhall be quench'd? 'Tis but juſt and reaſonable for thoſe ſinners to ſuffer *Eternally*, that would have ſinned *Eternally*, had they remain'd ſo long upon Earth.

And ſo much ſhall ſuffice for the ſecond general Head, the Dreadfulneſs of that day.

1. In the manner of our Saviours coming.

2. The ſtrict and impartial Tryal that ſhall paſs upon all men.

3. The unalterableneſs of the Sentence, and Eternity of the Rewards and Puniſhments.

The

The third general Head is the *Perſon* that ſhall be Judge, and that is our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt in his Humane Nature. *Hereafter ſhall ye ſee the Son of man ſitting at the right hand of the Power of God, and coming in the Clouds of the Air*, Mat. 26. 64. the like we have in St. *Johns* Goſpel; *The Father judges no man, but hath committed all Judgement to the Son*, Joh. 5. 22. To the Son, according to his Eternal Generation? No, but to the Son of Man; for ſo it follows, *And hath given him Power to judge, becauſe he is*

*is the Son of man.* S. *Peter* alſo declares it, *Acts* 10. 42. *God rais'd him up the third day, and ſhew'd him openly, and hath commanded Us to Preach unto the People, and to teſtifie, that it is He which is ordain'd of God to be the Judge both of the quick and dead.* He hath already diſcharg'd the Office of a Gracious Redeemer, and is now at the Right Hand of God, performing the part of a merciful Interceſſor for all unfeign'd and penitent Converts: But ſhall appear at the laſt day in quality of a juſt and unbyaſs'd Judge:

pect him no otherwiſe. *He ſhall judge the World with Equity*; More Equity than He found at their Hands, when he ſtood before the Tribunal of *Pontius Pilate*. The Evidence ſhall be every mans Heart, that moſt Impartial and unqueſtionable Evidence that will teſtifie the Truth, and nothing but the Truth; *In the day when God ſhall judge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Chriſt; their Conſcience bearing witneſs, and their thoughts the mean while accuſing, or excuſing one another*, Rom. 2. 26.

*And*

*And I ſaw a great white Throne,* (ſaith St. *John,*) *and him that ſat upon it, from whoſe Face the Heavens and the Earth fled away: And I ſaw the dead both ſmall and great ſtand before the Throne; and the Books were open'd,* (the Book of *Conſcience*, and of Gods *Omniſcience,*) *and the Dead were judg'd of thoſe things which are written in the Books, according to their* Deeds: According to the Talents they had receiv'd, and opportunities of *Grace* and Repentance which They have had.

And this brings me to the fourth and laſt general Head, the neceſſity of providing for that *day*, while *time* is preſent with us.

Let me therefore mind You, and my ſelf, that now is the accepted time; now on this ſide the Grave, is the day of Salvation: Let us leave our beloved ſins whilſt we have the *Grace*, and that preſently whilſt we have the *time*. *To day if you will hear the voice of his Commandments*, harden not your Hearts.

Conſider the madneſs of thoſe *People*, who, having

ving ſpent the Health and Vigour of their days in Malice, Envy, and all diſhoneſty, begin to repent at the laſt hour: And having liv'd like *Jews*, or worſe, then think to die like *Chriſtians*. True Repentance is never too late, but late Repentance is ſeldom true: I do therefore intreat you not to deceive your ſelves, as if the bare *Hearing* of this, or of any other Diſcourſe, were enough to prepare you for the laſt *Judgement*. *Felix* trembled at Saint *Paul*'s Sermon of Temperance, and Judgement to come; nay, the

Devils themſelves Believe, and tremble at the *Word* of God.

What then ſhall I do that I may eſcape the wrath to come? Is the material queſtion, to which I ſhall anſwer in a few particulars, which I pray God to give us Grace to obſerve.

First, Conſider the extreme vanity of that Repentance, or ſorrow for ſin, that never reaches beyond ſome faint reſolutions of amendment. How many men reſolve to be good, that never are good? It is in vain to expect, that either God

or-

or Man will accept the Will for the Deed, when there is Time and Opportunity of doing it.

II. Consider, our Blessed Saviour describing to us the last Judgement, represents the great Judge of the World, acquitting, or condemning Men according to the good they had done, or neglected to do: *They that have done good, shall go into everlasting Life, and They that have done evil, shall go into everlasting Fire. I was an hungred, and ye gave me no Meat, I was thirsty, and ye gave no Drink: I was a stranger,*

*and ye took me not in: naked, and ye cloath'd me not. Then shall he say to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepar'd for the Devil and his Angels*, Mat. 25.

III. If you be *real*, and without Hypocrisy in this matter, you will take notice of this advice; and 'tis not mine, but the Councel of the Church of *England*. If you be unfeignedly troubled for your *Sins*, and apprehensive of your Eternal Welfare, you will think no scruple of applying your self to the Councel of your

your Lawful Paſtors, unleſs the *Clergy* have loſt their Intereſt in the Conſciences of the People, as not to be truſted in this matter: But it is the expreſs Order of our Church, as you will find in her Exhortation before *Communion*, and in her Office for *Viſitation of the Sick*.

But ſome People, (who account all *Popery* that is taught or practis'd in the Church of *Rome*,) beſide the Churches Authority, deſire to have *Scripture* for it.

I pray conſider then, St. *Paul*, in the career of his ſins; being ſtruck from

from Heaven, was ſent to *Ananias*, that he might learn from him the way of life; and likewiſe *Cornelius* to St. *Peter*, *Acts* 10. 5. The Angel of God came unto *Cornelius*, and ſaid unto him, Cornelius, *ſend men to* Joppa, *and call for one* Simon, *Whoſe Sirname is* Peter: *He ſhall tell thee what thou oughtſt to do.* If every ſinner were ſufficient to reconcile himſelf to God, and quiet his own Conſcience, I underſtand not the meaning of the Prophet *Malachi* 2. 7. *The Prieſts Lips ſhould preſerve Knowledge, and the People*

*People ſhould ſeek the Law at his mouth.*

When mens *Eſtates* are in hazard, they apply themſelves to their *Lawyers*; when their *Health* is in danger, to the *Phyſician*; not confiding in their own skill: But every man at the peril of his Soul will be his own *Divine*. And why ſo much Conſultation with the *Lawyer* about the ſecurity of our Eſtates, and ſo little with the *Divine* about the Salvation of our Souls? The ſecret of it is this, we have a value for the Eſtate, and little or no opinion of our Souls.

Or,

Or, if every man be so intelligent in the *Scriptures*, as to need no bodies counsel; how comes it to pass that they wrest St. *Paul*'s Epistles, and other Scriptures to their own Destruction, as St. *Peter* speaks?

What then should a man of an ill Conscience do, but apply himself to the Physician? And what shall the Physician advise, not knowing the state and occasion of his Distemper? Our *Church* therefore, in the Office aforesaid, requires a special *Confession* of every sick person, in case he feel

feel his Conſcience troubled with any weighty matter: But where is the man (in Health or Sickneſs,) who, upon ſerious reflections, finds not ſome weighty matter lying on his Conſcience? Yet how many thouſands of unhappy people depart this Life without any ſenſe or care of their Souls in reference to this matter? Or if it ſometimes happens, that they have ſo much ſenſe upon their Sick-beds, as to ſend for the *Miniſter*; and He according to his Duty, ſhall put them in mind of this Grand Affair; their common

mon Anſwer is, they are ſatisfi'd, and hope they have made their Peace with God; as if God had not already appointed them to be Abſolv'd, and Reconcil'd by the *Miniſtry* of his Church.

*He hath given Power and Commandment to his Miniſters to declare and pronounce to his People, (being Penitent,) the Abſolution and Remiſſion of their ſins.*

*The Father judges no man, but hath committed all Judgement to the Son; and the Son, until his ſecond coming, hath left all Judgement to his Miniſters,*

*ſters, ſaid* St. *Chryſoſtom* in *lib.* 3. *de Sacerdotio.*

That there can be no *Repentance* without *Confeſſion* of ſins to God, is out of queſtion: And as for *Confeſſion* to a lawful *Prieſt*, I ſhall give the *Reader* this following account.

1. I ſhall ſet down the words of the Church of *England.* 2. The Judgements of the moſt Learn'd *Proteſtant Divines*, Primate *Uſher*, Biſhop *Talor*, Dr. *Hammond*, Mr. *Richard Hooker*, 3. The *Confeſſions* of the Reform'd Churches of *Germany.* 4. The practice of the preſent

sent *Greek* and *Armenian* Churches. 5. The Precepts and Examples of Holy Scripture.

1. Consider the Authority of the Church of *England*. The Minister is to exhort the People before the Administration of the Holy Communion, *viz.*

*If there be any of you which cannot quiet his own Conscience, but requires further comfort or councel, let him come to Me, or some other discreet and learn'd Minister of Gods Word, and open his Grief, that he may receive such ghostly councel, advice and comfort*

*comfort, as his Conſcience may be reliev'd; and that by the Miniſtry of Gods Word he may receive comfort and benefit of* Abſolution *for the quieting of his Conſcience, and the avoiding all ſcruple and doubt.*

In the Office for Viſitation of the Sick, *The ſick perſon ſhall be moved to make a ſpecial Confeſſion of his ſins, if he feel his Conſcience troubled with any weighty matter,* (and where is the Man that is not conſcious of ſome weighty matter?) *After which* Confeſſion *the Prieſt ſhall* Abſolve *him, if he humbly and heartily*

*desire it, after this sort: Our Lord Jesus Christ who hath left Power to his Church, to* Absolve *all sinners who truly Repent, and believe in him, of his great mercy forgive thee thine offences; and by his Authority committed unto me, I absolve thee from all thy sins;* In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

This special *Confession* and *Absolution* (in case of an ill *Conscience*) our Church hath expressly provided, because doubtless she thought it *necessary.*

And

And then if you would know the ſenſe of the Church of *England* a little after the expulſion of the Popes Supremacy, in the days of King *Henry* VIII. take it in their own words, ſubſcrib'd by *Thomas Cranmer* Arch-biſhop of *Canterbury*, *Edward* Archbiſhop of *York*, *Cuthbert* Biſhop of *Durham* and all the *Biſhops* and *Clergy* of *England*, out of a Book call'd the *Inſtitution of a Chriſtian.*

Item, *That this certain* Faith *and* Hope *is gotten, and alſo confirm'd by the applying of Chriſts Words and Promiſes of his Grace*

*and Favour contained in his Gospel, and the Sacraments instituted by Him in the New Testament.*

*And therefore, to attain to this certain Faith, the second part of* Pennance *is necessary, that is to say,* Confession to a Priest, *if it may be had: For the* Absolution *given by the Priest was instituted by Christ, to apply the Promises of Gods Grace and Favour to the Penitent.*

*Wherefore as touching* Confession, *we think it convenient that all* Bishops *and* Preachers *shall instruct the People committed to their spiritual charge,*

*charge, that they ought, and muſt certainly believe that the words of* Abſolution *pronounced by the Prieſt, be ſpoken by the Authority given to him by Chriſt in the Goſpel: And that they ought and muſt give no leſs Faith and credence to the ſame words of* Abſolution, *ſo pronounc'd by the Miniſters of the Church, than they would give to the very word and voice of God himſelf, according to the ſaying of Chriſt,* Whoſoever ſins ye do forgive, ſhall be forgiven; whoſe ſins ſoever ye do retain, ſhall be retain'd. *And again in another place,* who-

whoſoever heareth you, heareth me.

Item, *That the People may in no wiſe contemn this* Confeſſion, *which is made unto the Miniſters of the Church; but that they ought to repute the ſame as a very expedient and neceſſary means, whereby they may ask this* Abſolution *at the Prieſts hands, at ſuch time as they ſhall find their Conſciences griev'd with Sin, to the intent they may thereby attain certain comfort and conſolation of their Conſciences.*

This in their Opinion was no *Papal* Doctrine; *Cran-*

*Cranmer*, and the rest of the Pr. Bishops, (except *Fisher*) having before this rejected the *Popes Authority*.

In the next place let us hear the Sense of the Learned Primate *Usher*, that great searcher into the Doctrine of Antiquity, *Answ. to* Malone *the Jesuit*, printed *anno* 1625. *p.* 82.

'It appears (saith he) 'that the exhorting of the 'People to confess their 'Sins unto their Ghostly 'Fathers, makes no such 'wall of *Separation* be-'twixt the Ancient Do-'ctors and Us: Be it

'there-

'therefore known, that 'no kind of *Confession*, ei-'ther publick or private, 'is disallow'd by us, that 'is any way requisite for 'the due execution of 'that Ancient Power of 'the *Keys* which Christ 'hath bestow'd on his 'Church. The thing 'which we reject, is the 'the new *Pick-lock* of *Sa-'cramental Confession* ob-'truded upon us, as a 'matter necessary to Sal-'vation, by the Council of *Trent*.

Here the Reader may observe his allowance of the thing, separated from the abuses thereof; as when

when it is made a *Pick-lock of Secrets*; under-ſtanding by Secrets, not mens ſecret ſins againſt God, but *Intrigues* of this World. And I pray obſerve his following words, *viz.*

'It is found true by 'often experience *(p.89.)* 'that the wounded Con-'ſcience will ſtill pinch 'grievouſly, notwith-'ſtanding the *Confeſſion* 'made unto God in ſecret.

'At ſuch a time as this 'then, where the Sinner 'can find no eaſe at home, 'what ſhould he do, but 'uſe the beſt means he 'can to find it abroad? *Is*

'*there no Balm in* Gilead?
'Is there no Phyſician
'there? No doubt but
'God hath provided both
'the one and the other
'for Recovery of the
'*Health of the Daughter*
'*of his People*: And St.
'*James* hath given his di-
'rection, *Confeſs your ſins*
'*one to another, that you*
'*may be heal'd*; Accord-
'ing to which preſcrip-
'tion Saint *Baſil* well ob-
'ſerves, the very ſame
'courſe is to be held in
'the *Confeſſion of ſins*, as
'in the opening the *Diſ-*
'*ſeaſes* of the *Body*; As
'men do not diſcover
'their Bodily Diſeaſes to
'all

'all and every ſort of 'People, but to thoſe that 'are skilful in the Cure 'thereof: Even ſo ought 'the *Confeſſion* of our ſins 'to be made unto ſuch as 'are able to Cure them; 'according to that which 'is written, *Ye that are 'ſtrong, bear the infirmi-'ties of the weak.*

And further, *(pag.* 127.*)* 'That this Authority of 'Looſing, remains ſtill in 'the Church, we conſtant-'ly maintain againſt the 'Hereſie of the *Montaniſts* 'and *Novatians*, who, up-'on this pretence, among 'others, (that God only 'had Power to remit

'took away the Miniſte-
'rial Power of reconci-
'ling Penitents, which is
'directly contrary to the
'Doctrine deliver'd by St.
'*Paul*, That *if a man be*
'*overtaken in a fault, they*
'*which are ſpiritual ſhould*
'*reſtore ſuch a one in the*
'*ſpirit of meekneſs*: And
'particularly concerning
'the Inceſtuous *Corinthi-*
'*an*, who had been Ex-
'communicated; the A-
'poſtle tells the Church,
'that they ought to for-
'give him, leaſt he ſhould
'be ſwallow'd up of over-
'much ſorrow, 2 *Cor.* 2. 7.
'*To whom ye forgive any*
'*thing, I forgive alſo; for if*

'*I*

'*I forgave any thing, I for-*
'*gave it in the perſon of*
'*Chriſt*, ver. 10.

And again, (*pag.* 136.)
'Howſoever others may
'bring glad tidings of
'good things to the Peni-
'tent ſinner, as well as the
'Miniſter; yet neither
'can they do it with the
'ſame Authority, neither
'is it to be expected they
'ſhould do it with ſuch
'Power, ſuch aſſurance
'and full ſatisfaction to
'the afflicted Conſcience.
'And a private Brother
'in his place may deliver
'*Sound Doctrine, repre-*
'*hend Vice, exhort to Righ-*
'*teouſneſs* very commen-

'dably; yet hath the Lord
'notwithstanding this,
'for the necessary use of
'his Church, appointed
'publick Ministers, and
'given Them a peculiar
'power to Edification.

'So that you have done
'us wrong, in charging us
'to deny, that *Priests* have
'power to forgive sins;
'For the very formal
'words which our Church
'requires to be us'd in the
'*Ordination of a Priest*,
'are these; *Whose Sins thou*
'*dost forgive, they are for-*
'*given, whose sins thou dost*
'*retain, they are retain'd.*
'And therefore if this be
'all, we acknowledge
'most

'moſt willingly, that the
'principal part of the
'*Prieſts Miniſtry* is exer-
'cis'd in the matter of
'Forgiveneſs of ſins.

'Yea, whether the Mi-
'niſters of the Goſpel,
'(*pag.* 146.) may be ac-
'counted Judges in ſome
'ſort, we will not much
'contend; for we diſlike
'neither that ſaying of
'St. *Hierom*, *Qui claves*
'*regni cælorum habentes*
'*quodamodo ante diem*
'*Judicii judicant*, Having
'the Keys of the King-
'dom of Heaven, they
'judge after a ſort before
'the day of Judgement;
'nor that other ſaying of

'St. *Gregory*, *Principatum* 'ſuperni judicii ſortiuntur, 'ut vice Dei quibuſdam 'peccata retineant, & qui- 'buſdam relaxent. Obtain 'a Principality of Judge- 'ment from above, that 'they may in Gods ſtead 'retain the ſins of ſome, 'relax the ſins of others. 'All the queſtion is, whe- 'ther the Validity of the 'Prieſts *Abſolution*, de- 'pends not on the Reality 'and Sincerity of our *Re-* '*pentance from dead works*?

My poor Opinion is, it is no queſtion among any ſort of Chriſtians, that if hearty *Converſion* be wanting, all the *Abſolutions* in the

the World ſhall avail us nothing: But withall, a frank and particular *Confeſſion* of ſins ſeems to my Reaſon a better Evidence of true Repentance, than either a general *Confeſſion*, or no *Confeſſion* at all.

I ſhall only add a word or two more out of Biſhop *Uſher*, *pag.* 93. where he quotes St. *Auſtine* ſpeaking of the neceſſity of *Publick Confeſſion*, and *Repentance* for notorious Sins; *Nemo ſibi* ‘ *dicat, occultè ago pœni-* ‘ *tentiam, apud Deum ago;* ‘ *novit Deus qui mihi ig-* ‘ *nocit, quia in corde ago:* ‘ *Ergo ſine cauſa dictum eſt*

*Apo-*

'*Apoſtolis, quæ ſolveritis*
'*in terra, ſoluta erunt in*
'*cœlis*: *Ergo ſine cauſa*
'*claves datæ ſunt Eccleſiæ*
'*Dei? Fruſtramus Evan-*
'*gelium Dei, fruſtramus*
'*Verbi Chriſti? O ſuper-*
'*ba cervix! mens tortuo-*
'*ſa! &c. Auguſt. in lib. de*
'*Pœnitentia quæ poſtrema*
'*eſt Homilia ex* 50. 10.
'*Tom.* Let no man ſay
'unto himſelf, I repent
'ſecretly; I do it before
'God; God, who pardons
'me, doth know that I
'do it in my heart: In
'vain therefore is it ſaid
'to the Apoſtles, *Whatſo-*
'*ever ye ſhall looſe on*
'*Earth ſhall be loos'd in*

'*Hea-*

'*Heaven*: Are the Keys
'therefore in vain given
'to the Church of God?
'Do we fruſtrate the
'words of Chriſt? Do
'we fruſtrate the Goſpel
'of God? O proud neck!
'O crooked mind, *&c.*

'Moreover, *Gregory*
'*Nyſſen*, towards the end
'of his Sermon of *Repen-*
'*tance*, uſes this Exhor-
'tation to the ſinner,
'ΣΥΝΤΡΙΨΟΝ ΣΕΑΥΤΟΝ
'ΟΣΟΝ ΔΥΝΑΣΑΙ, *&c.*
'Afflict thy ſelf as much
'as thou canſt: Be ſen-
'ſible of the Diſeaſe
'wherewith thou art ta-
'ken; ſeek alſo the mour-
'ning of thy intirely af-
'fected

'fected Brethren to help
'thee unto liberty: Take
'likewiſe the Prieſt for a
'partner of thine afflicti-
'on as thy Father: For,
'who has ſo *Adamantine*
'a Soul, that he will not
'condole with his Child?
'ſhew to him (without
'bluſhing) the things that
'were kept ſecret: Diſ-
'cover the Vices of thy
'Soul, as ſhewing thy
'hidden Diſeaſe to thy
'Phyſician: He will have
'care both of thy Credit
'and of thy Cure, *&c.*
'Here *Gregory Nyſſen*
'would have us to com-
'municate our caſe to
'ſuch a Ghoſtly Father as

is

'is skilful in Phyſick of
'this kind; and would,
'(out of compaſſion of
'our Grief) apply him-
'ſelf to our Recovery.
'Therefore, ſaith *Origen*,
'*Circumſpice - diligentiùs*
'*cui debeas confiteri pecca-*
'*tum tuum; proba prius*
'*medicum cui debeas cau-*
'*ſam languoris exponere:*
'Look about thee dili-
'gently to whom thou
'ought'ſt to confeſs thy
'ſins; Try firſt the Phy-
'ſician unto whom thou
'ought'ſt to declare thy
'Malady: Who knows,
'to be weak with him
'that is weak, to weep
'with him that weeps,
'who

'who underſtands the 'Diſcipline of compaſſi-'on; that ſo at length, 'if he ſhall give any 'Councel, thou may'ſt do, 'and follow it.

'This kind of Medici-'nal *Confeſſion* we will 'approve of, and acknow-'ledge to have been or-'dinarily preſcrib'd by 'the Ancient Fathers for the cure of ſecret ſins: 'But that new compen-'dious method of Heal-'ing, invented by our *Ro-'man Paracelſians*, (*Abſo-'lution* being too eaſily 'given to Penitents) the 'Fathers were ignorant 'of.

'The

'The Laws of the 'Church preſcrib'd a cer-'tain time unto Penitents, 'wherein they ſhould 'give proof of the ſound-'neſs of their *Repentance*; 'and gave order, that then 'they ſhould be forgiven 'and comforted, leſt they 'ſhould be ſwallow'd up 'of overmnch heavineſs: 'So that, firſt their *Pen-'nance* was injoyn'd un-'to them, and thereby 'they were held to be 'bound: After perfor-'mance whereof, they re-'ceiv'd their *Abſolution*, 'by which they were 'loos'd again. But the '*Audian* Hereticks, with-

out

'out any ſuch Tryal taken
'of their *Repentance*, did
'give *Abſolution* preſent-
'ly upon their *Confeſſion*,
'as the *Popiſh Prieſts* uſe
'to do now adays. For
'the *Papiſts*, after they
'have given *Abſolution*,
'do enjoyn *Pennance* to
'the Party Abſolv'd,
'which ought to go be-
'fore *Abſolution*.

The ſum of his Opini-
on is this, that *Prieſts* do
forgive or retain ſins,
while they judge and de-
clare that they are for-
given by God, or retain'd;
the original power of
forgiving ſins belonging
to God alone: All which

I leave to the Readers conſideration, who may (if he pleaſes) conſult *Malone*'s Reply, if he have any doubt whether the Primate does truly repreſent the practice of the Church of *Rome* in this matter.

I only obſerve, how he aſſerts and approves of *private Confeſſion to a Prieſt*, and of *Abſolution* thereupon, as a moſt profitable and medicinal thing, not being negligently perform'd.

In the next place take the ſenſe of that excellent man, Bp. *Taylor*, *Gold. Gr.* p. 144. *Beſides the exami-*

*nation of your Conſcience, there is great uſe of the* Holy Confeſſion; *which, though it be not ſo peremptorily commanded, as if without it no Salvation could poſſibly be had; yet you are adviſ'd by the Church, under whoſe Diſcipline you live, that before you receive the Holy Sacrament, or when you are viſited with any dangerous ſickneſs, if you find any one particular ſin, or more, that lies heavy upon you, to diſburthen your ſelf of it into the boſom of your* Confeſſor, *who, not only ſtands between God and You, to pray for you, but hath the*

*power*

*power of the* Keys *committed to him, upon your true Repentance, to* Abſolve *you in Chriſt's Name from thoſe Sins which you have confeſs'd to him.*

*And having made choice of ſuch a* Confeſſor, *who is every way qualifi'd that you may truſt your Soul with him, you are advis'd plainly and ſincerely to open your Heart to him; and, that laying aſide all conſideration of any perſonal weakneſs in him, you are to look upon him as a* Truſtee *from* God, *and commiſſion'd as his Miniſter, to Hear, and* Judge, *and* Abſolve *you.*

And further, I pray obſerve the words of the Learn'd and Pious Dr. *Hamond* in his *Practical Catechiſm*, p. 67, 68. in Anſwer to this queſtion, *viz.*

*Why ſhould we confeſs ſins to* Men, *and particularly to* Presbyters?

*Becauſe we are commanded by St.* James *to confeſs our Faults one to another, that we may be capable of one anothers Prayers.*

2. *Becauſe our ſins may poſſibly be ſuch, wherein other men are injur'd, and then* Confeſſion *to them is the firſt degree towards Reconciliatiation,* Mat. 5.24.

*Or*

*Or if our ſins be only againſt* God, *then* Confeſſion *to them his Miniſters alſo will be no way improper, but in ſome kind neceſſary to Him which deſires their Abſolution*, v. 15.

3. *Becauſe there being two parts in Sin, the* Guilt *and the* Corruption; *the one to be pardon'd, the other cur'd; The firſt being confeſt to* God *to obtain his Pardon, ought alſo, (if it have been offenſive and ſcandalous to the Congregation) to be acknowledg'd to them, to make them ſatisfaction for the ill Example, and avert from ſin whom it had invited to it. And for*

*the*

*the Cure, it will ſure be very profitable to adviſe with others (eſpecially the Phyſicians of the Soul,) how, and by what means this cure may be wrought; how a raging ſin may be ſubdu'd, the occaſion to be avoided, to which end alone the diſcloſing of our particular ſtate is more than profitable.*

*And this being ſuppos'd, will be acknowledg'd neceſſary for a Chriſtian not to deſpiſe ſuch proper uſeful means to a neceſſary end; unleſs without that help he can direct himſelf, which ignorant men, and habitual ſinners in any kind will*

*will hardly be able to do.*

4. *Because this may much tend to my comfort, when another,(whose Office it is,) upon a strict survey and shrift of my former life, and present testification of my* Repentance, *may (upon good grounds give me* Absolution, *and pass Judgement on Me better than I can do upon my self.*

The Judgement of the Reformed Churches of *Germany*, *Lutherans*, and others out of *Harm. Conf. Sect.* 8. *ex* 5 *cap. Confess. Bohem.*

*That all men should at certain times Confess their* Offences *to God in the hearing*

*hearing of his Miniſters, thereby to ſhew how much their ſins do diſpleaſe them, and to receive inſtruction for the more circumſpect carriage of Themſelves hereafter: Alſo to be reſolv'd if any ſcruple of conſcience do entangle their minds; and, which is moſt material, to the end that Chriſtians may at Gods Hands ſeek every one his own particular* pardon *through the Power of the* Keys, *which the Miniſter of God uſing according to our bleſſed Saviours Inſtitution, it is their part to receive as Gods moſt mer-t ful Ordinance for their good;*

*good; and without any doubt to embrace joyfully his Grace ſo given them; according to the words of our Lord, which ſaith,* Whoſe ſins ye remit they are remitted, whatſoever ye ſhall bind on Earth ſhall be bound in Heaven: *So that they are to reſt aſſur'd of the Forgiveneſs of all their ſins, as from Chriſt's own Word and Power.*

And as for private *Confeſſion* and *Abſolution*, it ſtands with us of the Church of *England* thus; (ſays the judicious *Hooker, Eccleſ. Polity*, lib. 6. pag. 346.) *viz.* The *Mi-*

*niſters* Power to *Abſolve* is publickly-taught and profeſs'd; But upon the *People* there is not impos'd ſuch a neceſſity of opening their ſins unto men, as though otherwiſe, Remiſſion of ſins were impoſſible, (and who ever thought ſo, even of *Baptiſm* it ſelf? Neither any ſuch opinion had of private Confeſſion as though it were either unlawful or unprofitable, abuſes being ſet apart: But for caution to ſuch as come to the Holy Sacrament, and for the comfort of ſuch as are ready to depart this World, the

Church

Church of *Engl.* thought fit to give admonition of a ſpecial *Confeſſion*, leſt careleſsneſs of general Confeſſion ſhould, as commonly it doth, extinguiſh all remorſe of mens particular Crimes. We ſay (*p.* 333.) Let no man look for Pardon, who ſmothers and conceals his ſin: *For only he that confeſſeth, and forſaketh his ſins, ſhall find mercy.*

*The Doctrine and Practice of the preſent* Greek *and* Armenian *Churches, out of Mr.* Ricaut's *Hiſtory, publiſh'd* 1678. chap. 12.

'Let us premiſe ſome-
'thing touching Confeſſi-
'on of Sins, which is to
'be perform'd four times
'in the year to a Prieſt
'lawfully conſtituted and
'ordain'd; that is, by ſuch
'who have leiſure and
'convenience of living:
'But Prieſts, and others
'entred into Holy Or-
'ders, or into a Life of
'Regular Devotion, are
'oblig'd to a Confeſſion
'once a Month: The la-
'bouring and common
'People are enjoyn'd to
'a Confeſſion but once a
'year, and that before
'their entrance into the
'great *Lent*, which is be-
'fore

'fore *Easter*: To Sick
'and Infirm People it is
'recommended as a Re-
'medy against the Dis-
'seases of the Soul, and for
'the ease of a Burthen'd
'Conscience.

'Repentance the *Greeks*
'call METANOIA, and
'is by them defin'd to
'be a sorrow of heart
'for sin, of which a man
'accuses himself before a
'Priest, with a firm reso-
'lution to correct the
'Errorus of his past Life
'by that which is to
'come, and with inten-
'tion to perform whatso-
'ever shall be enjoyn'd
'him by his Spiritual

'Pastor for his Penance.

'By which definition 'it appears how necessary 'the *Greeks* esteem Confession to a Priest, having these words in the 'Orthodox Doctrine of 'Orienral Church, (*viz.*) 'The Priest cannot release, unless he inquire 'what he is to release. 'And likewise it is apparent by the foregoing 'definition, that the *Priest* 'hath Power to enjoin 'Pennance, which they 'call TO' EΠITI'MION, such 'as *Prayers extraordinary* '*Alms*, *Fastings*, *Visiting* '*of Holy Places*, and the 'like.

'When

'When a Penitent 'comes to Confeſſion, the 'Prieſt utters theſe words 'to him, "ΟΡΑ "ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ 'ΚΥΡΙΟΥ, *&c. Behold the 'Angel of the Lord is at 'hand to take thy Confeſ- 'ſion: See therefore that 'thou conceal no ſin for 'fear of ſhame; for I am 'alſo a man and a ſinner as 'thou art.*

'Confeſſion of ſins ver- 'bally and particularly to 'a *Prieſt* is eſteem'd a ne- 'ceſſary duty for conſti- 'tuting a perfect Contri- 'tion; though they do 'not deny, but a perſon 'dying in a ſtate of rege- 'neration, that is to ſay,

'with a Repentance pro-
'ceeding from the Love
'of God, and having not
'opportunity, by the ſud-
'denneſs of death, or ſome
'other accident, to con-
'feſs and receive Abſolu-
'tion, may yet through
'the Mercy of God be
'ſaved: But yet the O-
'miſſion thereof in a
'place where it may be
'obtain'd, is a ſin, which,
'(as they ſay,) can no o-
'therwiſe be pardon'd in
'the next World, than by
'the Prayers of the Saints
'in Heaven, and by the
'Alms and Oblations of
'good men on Earth.

'The

'The fear and appre-
'henſion of ſome Autho-
'rity in the Church, *p.* 16.
'as the power of the
'*Keys*, *Excommunications*
'and other *Eccleſiaſtical*
'*Cenſures*, work a Reve-
'rence in the People to-
'wards the Clergy; and
'is indeed the main Pillar
'and Foundation which
'ſupports a Church. For,
'as *Tacitus* ſpeaks of the
'*Jewiſh Nation*, when un-
'der the *Roman* power,
'that *Honor Sacerdotii fir-*
'*mamentum potentiæ eo-*
'*rum*; The Honour which
'they gave to their Prieſt-
'hood was the Founda-
'tion of their *Regimen*.

'For

'For that which com-
'mands the Conſcience,
'reduces the Body, Will
'and Affections to Obedi-
'ence.

'And if a Clergy have
'loſt the Conſciences of
'the People, they have
'loſt all.

'More particularly in
'Eccleſiaſtical Polity, it is
'the Fence and Hedge of
'the Sheepfold: this being
'broken down, the Sheep
'ſtray, and Satan enters
'with his Seed of Schiſm
'and Hereſie: For what
'can hinder men from
'running into Prodigies
'of Fancy and wild Opi-
'nions, where every man

'is

" is his own Paſtor and his own Biſhop.

Having given the Reader this account of *Confeſſion* to a Prieſt, the next thing is the conſideration of the Precepts & Examples of Holy *Scripture*.

Firſt, In the *Old Teſtament* you ſhall find this Precept, *Numb.* 5. 5. *And the Lord ſpake unto* Moſes, *ſaying, ſpeak unto the Children of* Iſrael, *when a man or woman ſhall commit any ſin that men commit, to do a treſpaſs againſt the Lord, and that perſon be guilty, then they ſhall confeſs their ſins which they have done,* That is to ſay, the very deed

deed it ſelf in particular they ſhall acknowledge.

The *Jews*, with whom no Repentance is available without Confeſſion, had firſt their general Confeſsion, which once every year was made both ſeverally by each of the People for himſelf upon the day of expiation, and by the Prieſt for them all.

On the day of expiation (as Mr. *Hooker* tells us out of the *Rabbins*, *Eccleſ. Pol. lib. 6. pag.* 334.) the High Prieſt maketh three expreſs Confeſsions, acknowledging unto God the manifold tranſgreſsions, of the whole *Nation*, his

his own Perſonal Offences likewiſe, together with the ſins as well of his Family as of the reſt of his Rank and Order.

They had again their voluntary *Confeſſions* at Times and Seaſons, when men bethinking themſelves of their ill lives, were reſolv'd to change their courſe; the beginning of which alteration was ſtill *Confeſſion* of ſins.

And over and beſides theſe, the Law impoſed upon them alſo that ſpecial Confeſsion, which they call *Confeſsion* of the *particular fault*; for in *Levit.* 5. we read, when

a man hath ſinned in ſuch or ſuch a thing, *He ſhall then confeſs how in that thing he hath offended.*

And that they did confeſs before their *Prieſts*, and before *men*, is apparent from the words of the Son of *Syrack*, *Eccluſ.* 4. 26. *Be not aſham'd to confeſs thy ſins; for there is a ſhame that bringeth ſin*, and there is a ſhame which is Glory and *Grace*; (*ver.* 21.) but the ſhame is uſually in Confeſſion not unto God, but unto men.

For ſuch kind of ſpecial ſins (ſaith Mr. *Hooker* out of *Miſne Tora*, *cap.* 1.) they had alſo ſpecial Sacrifices,

crifices, wherein the manner was, that the *Offender* ſhould lay his Hands on the Head of the Sacrifice which he brought, and ſhould there make Confeſsion to God, ſaying; *Now O Lord I have offended, and done wickedly in thy ſight, this or this being my Fault; behold I repent me, and am utterly aſham'd of my doings: My purpoſe is never to return more to the ſame crime.*

Of Malefactors convict by witneſs, their cuſtom was to exact (as *Joſhua* did of *Achan*) open Confeſsion; *My Son, now give glory to the Lord God of*

If-

Iſrael, *confeſs unto him, & declare unto me what thou haſt committed; conceal it not from me.* Joſ. 7. 19.

Concerning Injuries or Treſpaſſes which happened between men, they highly commended ſuch as would acknowledge before many, ſaying, *I have verily offended this man, thus and thus I have done unto him; but behold I do now repent, and am ſorry.*

And ſo much of *Confeſſion* among the Anciet *Jews*, which alſo the Devouter ſort do practiſe at this day.

The great *Quære* is, where are the Precepts obliging

obliging us to confeſs our ſins unto men under the *New Teſtament*?.

Firſt, I pray obſerve the force of our Saviours words, *Mat.* 16. 19. *And I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, whatſoever thou ſhalt bind on Earth ſhall be bound in Heaven, and whatſoever thou ſhalt looſe on Earth ſhall be looſed in Heaven.* Again he repeats it upon another occaſion, *Mat* 18. 18. *Verily I ſay unto you, whatſoever ye ſhall bind on Earth ſhall be bound in Heaven, and whatſoever ye ſhall looſe on Earth ſhall be looſed*, &c. K Like-

Likewiſe after his Reſurrection, *Joh.*20.22,23. *And when he had ſaid this, he breathed on them, and ſaith unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghoſt, whoſoever ſins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, whoſoever ſins ye retain, they are retained.* That by theſe words is conferred on the *Miniſtry* of the *New Teſtament* Authority to forgive or retain ſins, *ſecret* or *open*, is the unanimous voice of the voice of the Ancient Church, as we have heard before out of Primate *Uſher*.

The Queſtion is, How ſhall Chriſt's *Miniſters* ab-

Abſolve or retain ſins whereof they have no *cognizance*? According to the maxim of the *Eaſtern* Churches, *viz. The Prieſt cannot releaſe, unleſs he enquire firſt what he is to releaſe*: So that the Sacerdotal Power of *Abſolution* being of Divine Inſtitution, the duty of *Confeſſion* muſt be ſo too.

But you will ſay, publick and ſcandalous ſinners are obliged to the Diſcipline of *Confeſſion*: Private ſinners are under no ſuch Obligation, but at liberty whether they will confeſs to God, or to his Miniſters.

I anſwer, where do you find this in the *Scriptures*, namely a *neceſsity* of reconciling *open*, but not *ſecret* ſinners by the Miniſtry of the Church? Scandalous Offenders muſt confeſs publickly; For what neceſsity, I pray? to ſatisfie the *Congregation*, (you will ſay) for the ill example: Is that all? Is there no further neceſsity in the caſe, of being reconcil'd to God by the Sentence of *Abſolution*? And have *ſecret* ſinners no need of this *Abſolution*? This *(Reader)* is a new Interpretation put upon our Saviours words, *Whoſoever*

*ſoever ſins ye remit, they are remitted unto them.* And that by *John Cauvin*, alias *Calvin*, a Frenchman who at the Age of * 27 years, without any pretence to inſpiration, takes upon him to dictate to the whole World, and ridicule the practices of the Antient Church.

*Then he writ and publiſh'd his Inſtitutions

No neceſſity of private Pennance or Confeſsion to a *Prieſt*, was a Doctrine very convenient for the gathering and obliging of a new *Sect*; as convenient as for ſome deſigning popular man (for the raiſing

raiſing himſelf an Intereſt with the *People*) to promiſe *Eaſe* and *Liberty* from their old Taxes and Impoſitions.

You will tell me, God can forgive ſecret ſinners without Confeſsion to a *Prieſt*: Very true; and he can pardon ſcandalous ſinners without publick Pennance and Confeſſion before the *Congregation*.

The Queſtion is, where do you find any Promiſe in the *New Teſtament*, that he will Pardon *either* immediately, by *Himſelf*, without the Miniſtry of his *Church*? *If we confeſs our ſins, he is faith-*

*ful and juſt to forgive us our ſins*: Faithful and juſt, to what? Even to his own *Promiſe*, which he hath thrice repeated, *whoſoever ſins ye remit, they are remitted unto them.* But other Promiſe, that he will do it without the *Miniſtry* of the *Keys*, we read not of in the *New Teſtament*.

Almighty God makes uſe of ſecond Cauſes as the Inſtruments of his Holy Will. In the exerciſe of his Juſtice he uſes the Miniſtry of Devils and Wicked Spirits: But his Mercy and Goodneſs to Penitent Sinners he thinks

thinks fit to diſpenſe by the Hands of his Biſhops and Miniſters: And as in Heaven he is ſerved by Angels, ſo on Earth he uſeth the Service of his Prieſts, and all to accompliſh his Holy Will, and to manifeſt his incomprehenſible Goodneſs to poor mortals. *We have receiv'd the Miniſtry of Reconciliation* (ſaith St. *Paul;*) let a man ſo account of us, as Diſpenſers of the Myſteries of God, 1 *Cor.* 4. 1.

St. *Auſtin*'s words quoted by Primate *Uſher* are remarkable; *Nemo ſibi dicat occultè ago pœnitentiam, apud Deum ago; ergo ſine*

*ſine cauſa dictum eſt Apoſtolis, quorum peccata ſolveritis in terris, ſoluta erunt in cœlis, &c. Let no man ſay I repent ſecretly, I do it before God alone; if this be all, then in vain is it ſaid unto the Apoſtles, whoſoever ſins ye remit, they are remitted: In vain are the Keys given to the Church of God: Do we fruſtrate the words of Chriſt? Do we evacuate the Goſpel of God, &c.*

And now I cannot but wonder at *Calvin*'s Argument, from the Fact of *Nectarius*, Patriarch of *Conſtantinople*, *Inſt. l.* 3. *c.* 4. Sect. 7. *Nectarius vir*

*ſanctitate & eruditione clarus, confitendi ritum abrogavit: Hic, hic aures Aſini iſti arrigant; ſi Lex Dei erat auricularis confeſsio, qui auſus eſſet Nectarius eam refigere atque convellere?* The Antient Chriſtians at *Conſtantinople* were wont to make publick Confeſsion even of their moſt ſecret ſins. This practice, upon occaſion of an Infamy drawn upon the Clergy by the Confeſsion of a Gentlewoman debauch'd by a Deacon of that City, *Nectarius* thought fit to aboliſh, *Socr. Hiſt. lib. 5. cap. 19.*

Was

Was this well or ill done of *Nectarius*? If well, how comes *Calvin*, or his Disciples, to exact publick Confessions and Penance at *Geneva*, and elsewhere at this day? If ill, to what purpose is the Objection? Let the Reader examine the matter in *Socrates*, and he shall find, that *Nectarius* suppress'd only the publick Confession of secret sins, as Bishop *Usher* acknowledgeth, *Answer to Malome*, pag. 95, 96.

Publick Confession and Absolution of scandalous sins *Calvin* allows as warranted by the Scriptures:

But for his Opinion of ſecret Confeſsion, the beſt way is to conſider him out of his own words. *Miror qua fronte auſint contendere Confeſsionem, de qua loquuntur, juris eſſe Divini; cujus equidem vetuſtiſsimum eſse uſum fatemur, ſed quem facile evincere poſſumus olim fuiſſe liberum.* Inſtit. lib. 3. cap. 4. Sect. 7. *I marvel with what face they dare affirm the Confeſsion whereof they ſpeak, to be of Divine right; the uſe whereof we grant indeed to be very Antient, but ſuch as we are able to prove in old time to have been voluntary.* But then me-

methinks he contradicts this, Sect. 18. *Multis post Christum seculis inaudita fuit hæc Confessio, in quibus sine hac conditione remittebantur peccata. This secret Confession was unheard of many Ages after Christ, &c.* Very Antient, and yet unheard of many Ages after Christ.

And further I pray take notice of these words; 'Nec minoris efficaciæ 'aut fructûs est privata 'Absolutio, ubi ab iis pe-'titur qui singulari re-'medio ad infirmitatem 'suam sublevandam opus 'habent? Accidit enim 'non raro, ut qui genera-

'les promiſsiones audit,
'quæ ad totam fidelium
'congregationem deſti-
'nantur maneat nihil-
'ominus in aliqua dubita-
'tione, ac velut remiſ-
'ſione nondum impetratâ
'inquietum adhuc ani-
'mum habeat. Idem ſi
'Paſtori ſuo ſecretum ani-
'mi vulnus aperuerit at-
'que illam Evangelii vo-
'cem peculiariter ad ſe
'directam audiveriter ad
'remittuntur tibi peccata
'tua, confide, animum
'confirmat ad ſecurita-
'tem; illâque, qua prius
'æſtuabat, trepidatione
'liberatur, that is, *No*
*leſs effectual and profitable*
*is*

*is private Absolution, when it is asked by them that have need of special remedy for relief of their Consciences: It happening oftentimes that he which heareth the general Promises of the Gospel, remaineth nevertheless in some doubt and unquietness of mind, as though his sins were yet unpardon'd. But the same man, when he hath confess'd to his own Pastor the secret sores of his Conscience, and hath heard that sentence of the Gospel direct to himself in particular,* Thy sins are forgiven thee, be of good Hope, *then gives himself assu-*

*rance of mind, and ſatisfaction*, &c.

But then his following words let the Reader, if he can, underſtand, 'At 'verò cum de Clavibus 'agitur, ſemper cavendum 'eſt ne facultatem ali-'quam ſomniemus ab 'Evangelii prædicatione 'ſeparatam. *When we ſpeak of the Power of the Keys, we muſt take heed that we dream not of any Power ſevered from the preaching of the Goſpel.*

Read this mans writings, and you ſhall find it in this and many other inſtances, no eaſie matter to reconcile him with him-

himſelf: For thus again he ſpeaks, *lib.* 3. *cap.* 4. Sect. 13. 'Interim quin 'ſiſtant ſe Paſtori oves, 'quoties ſacram Cænam 'participare volunt, adeo 'non reclamo, ut maxime 'velim hoc ubique obſer- 'vari; nam qui habent 'impeditam Conſcienti- 'am referre inde poſſunt 'ſingularem fructum, &c. that is, *That the Sheep do conſult their Paſtor, eſpecially before receiving the Holy Communion, I am ſo far from being againſt it, that I very much deſire it may be every where in practice*, &c.

In

In ſhort, the Opinion which he would advance is this, that the Power of remitting and retaining ſins is nothing elſe but an Authority to Preach the Goſpel, to declare to ſinners in a *Sermon*, that their ſins be forgiven if they repent; and as for private ſinners, they will do very well to confeſs to their own *Paſtors*; if not, they may chooſe.

Yet by and by he pronounces, 'Nihil mirum 'ſi auricularem iſtam 'Confeſſionem rem adeo 'peſtilentem totque no-'minibus Eccleſiæ noxi-'am damnamus & ſubla-

'tam

'tam è medio cupimus. *It is no marvel if we condemn and desire to have utterly taken away this* Confession *in the* Ear *of a* Priest, *as a thing pestilent, and many ways hurtful to the Church.* Instit. lib. 3. cap. 4. Sect. 19.

First he grants it to be very *Antient*, but no matter of *Necessity*: Then he says, it was a thing unheard of many Ages after *Christ*. Then, says he, 'tis a thing very effectual and profitable, *Pastori suo secretum animi vulnus aperire*; But in conclusion he would have it utterly taken away. The

Reader

Reader may please to examine my Citations, if he doubt whether I do him any wrong. *Sistant se Pastori suo oves, quoties sacram cœnam participare volunt, &c.* He would have us to consult our Pastors, and confess our sins, especially before we receive the Holy Communion. How is this to be done? Secretly in the ear of our Pastor, or otherwise?

But that the Power of remitting and retaining sins should be nothing else but an Authority to Preach the Gospel, and declare to sinners in a Ser-

mon

*mon*, that they are forgiven if they repent, is an odd Opinion, and contrary to all Antiquity; whose sense was, that *Deacons* themselves might receive Power to Preach the Gospel, but not Power to Absolve sinners.

And when he objects against secret Confession to a Priest, the words of *David*, *Psal.* 19. *Who can understand his Errours?* He forgets that the Argument takes away also private Confession to Almighty God; it being as hard a matter to catalogue all our sins in Confession to God, as unto

Man.

man. Surely more is not requir'd of any *Penitent*, then after the moſt diligent examination of his paſt life, to confeſs all he knows, and all he remembers; and then to pray, *Cleanſe thou me* (O God) *from my ſecret Faults.*

Proceed we now to the Examples of Holy *Scripture.*

It is recorded of *John* Baptiſt, that unto him *Jeruſalem*, and all *Judea* made Confeſsion of their ſins, *Matt.* 3. 6. His Doctrine was, *Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* They heard it, and believed there could

be

be no Repentance without Confeſsion.

Again, *Many of thoſe that believ'd came to the Apoſtles, and Confeſs'd their Deeds, Act.* 19. 18. which Good and Virtuous act (ſays Mr. *Hooker,*) no wiſe man can diſallow, but highly commend in thoſe whoſe Hearts the Grace of God ſhall incline thereunto: And this (ſaith he,) proveth Confeſsion practiſed as a vertuous Act, but not commanded as a Sacrament. Well, 'tis certainly a *Virtuous Act*: Why then, *My Brethren* (ſaith St. *Paul*) *whatſoever*

*ever things are honest, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any* Virtue, *think on these things*, Phil. 3. 8.

The Prodigal Son repents of his lewd life, returns home and makes his Confession; *Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son; wherefore make me as one of thy hired Servants.* And the Father said unto his Servants, *Bring forth the best Robe and put it on him, and put a Ring on his Hand, and Shooes*

*Shooes on his Feet, and bring hither the fatted Calf and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for my Son was loſt, and is found, &c.*

The Thief on the Croſs makes a voluntary acknowledgement of his crimes, ſaying, *This man hath done nothing amiſs, but we have received the due Reward of our Deeds*; that is, we ſuffer juſtly for the *Felonies* we have committed, *Lord remember me when thou comeſt into thy Kingdom.*

This Faith and Confeſsion was ſo obliging to our Saviour, that he pronounces immediately, *To*

*day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe.*

Saint *Paul* to manifeſt a real Contrition for his ſins, makes not only a *General* but *Particular* Confeſsion to *Timothy*, and leaves it upon Record; his general Confeſsion in theſe words, *Jeſus Chriſt came into the World to ſave ſinners of whom I am chief*: His particular Confeſsion, *I was injurious, I was a Blaſphemer, I was a Perſecutor, but I obtain'd mercy, becauſe I did it ignorantly*, 1 Tim. 1. 13.

This is to judge our ſelves, that we may not be judged of the Lord. If

all

all these *Penitents* made no scruple thus to arraign themselves before all the *World*; much less may You or I scruple to accuse our selves in *Private*.

To these examples of Holy Scripture I might add another instance of true *Repentance*, and that is the *Confessions* of Saint *Austin*, a worthy Book, written with that fervency of Devotion, and excellency of Stile; where he gives a History of all the Follies of his past life, *viz.* 'Recordari volo (Deus 'meus) transactas fœditates meas & carnales cor-'ruptiones animæ meæ;

'quem fructum habui
'miser in iis quæ nunc re-
'colens erubesco? Maxi-
'mè in illo furto, in quo
'ipsum furtum amavi,
'nulla compulsus egestate
'aut penuria, sed fastidio
'justitiæ & sagina iniqui-
'tatis: Exhalabantur ne-
'bulæ de limosa concu-
'piscentia carnis, & obnu-
'bilabat atque obfusca-
'bant cor meum. *Confes.*
'*lib.* 2. *cap.* 1, *cap.* 6.

*Enemies* to private Confession are of three sorts.

1. All *Dissenters* from the established Church.

2. All *Atheistical* and Voluptuous *Livers*.

3. There

3. There are another sort pretending Sobriety, whose Religion is so mingled, and vitiated with considerations of the *World* and the *Flesh*, that they desire to be excused in this matter; having so little sense of a future *day* of *reckoning*, that they are for no more Religion then needs must; and when they have heard a *Sermon*, there is an *end* of their *Religion*.

This Confession is abused, and made a Politick *Engine* in the Church of *Rome* (they cry;) and that is pretence enough for them: But I never met

met with a *Good* man of the Church of *England*, but he was for it.

Many *Roman Catholicks* confeſs their ſins and get *Abſolution*, that they may ſin upon a new ſcore; and many *Proteſtants* live viciouſly after all the *Sermons* they hear, and *Sacraments* they receive; inſomuch, that we hardly perceive a grain leſs of Envy, Hatred or Malice, Pride, Sedition, or Faction for all our *Preaching*; and yet 'tis our Duty to Preach ſtill.

O! but 'tis a Doctrine not ſo *ſeaſonable* (ſay ſome) and the People are not

not able to bear it. I Anſwer, what then are they able to bear? *A General* Diſcourſe out of the Pulpit, about which the *Preacher* perhaps hath beſtow'd a Weeks pains, that they may forget it in half an hour.

But the Age cannot bear it: What cannot it bear? Repentance towards God, and Reconciliation by the Miniſtry of his Prieſts. *Sermons* only muſt reconcile us.

*Benefits of Confeſſion.*

By It we render our ſelves more capable of the Compaſsion and tender Mercy

Mercy of God, which knoweth not how to condemn ſinners that condemn themſelves. Nothing more true than the ſaying of *Tertullian*, *Tantum relevat Confeſſio delictorum, quantum diſſimulatio exaggerat*; Confeſſion of ſins does as much diminiſh, as concealment aggravates their guilt.

A *general* Confeſſion, that thou art a *Sinner*, will neither ſo humble nor correct thy Soul, as if thou didſt preſent a *Catalogue* of thy ſins before God: This ſhall give thee a better underſtanding of thy ſelf; and by the

the Grace of God preſerve thy feet from falling. It is ſafer to be ſtung here with the remembrance, than hereafter with the Torment of ſin.

What then? were the Fathers of the Primitive Church without the uſe of private Confeſsion? *I affirm no ſuch thing* (ſaith Mr. *Hooker*;) *for men thought it the ſafeſt courſe to open their ſecret Crimes, and crave Impoſition of* Pennance *from thoſe to whom our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath committed the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Saint *Hierom* calls it, *Secunda post naufragium tabula*. And St. *Chryſoſtom* in his 7*th*. *Homily* to the People of *Antioch* obſerves, *That* Adam *and* Eve *were expuls'd out of Paradiſe, becauſe inſtead of Confeſſing their ſin, they began to excuſe and ſhift it; the Man on the Woman, and the Woman on the Serpent. If I cover'd my Tranſgreſſions as* Adam, Job 31.33.

But you will ask, may not a Confeſsion ſerve turn? Where is the neceſsity of particular Confeſsion to a *Prieſt*?

Still this is the *Quæry*, as if the *Rulricks* of the Church

Church of *England*, the Authority of all the *Eaſtern* Churches, and (what is above all) the Power of the *Keys* left by our Saviour, were of no force to oblige us in this matter.

Is not the Power of Binding and Abſolving ſinners a part of the *Sacerdotal* Function? Is the *Prieſt* bound to Abſolve thee, and thou not bound to Confeſs? But, you will ſay, the general Confeſſion and Abſolution at the beginning of our *Liturgy* is ſufficient: I Anſwer, if ſo, what needed the Church of *England*

have ordered a ſpecial Confeſsion and Abſolution in her Office for Viſitation of the Sick? And that in caſe the Sick Party feel his Conſcience troubled with any weighty matter?

Now I would fain know, are only ſick Perſons provided for in this *Rubrick*? Is there no obligation upon Healthy and Strong People (though conſcious of never ſo many Crimes) to look to themſelves by a timely *Confeſſion* and *Abſolution*?

Is it time enough for Sinners to think of this matter when they are Sick?

Sick? How many are ſurpriz'd with ſudden death?

Therefore the Church of *England* in her *Communion* Service provides further, *viz.* *If there be any of you which cannot quiet his own Conſcience, let him open his Grievance to Me, or ſome other Diſcreet and Learned Miniſter of Gods word, that he may receive Ghoſtly Councel, and the benefit of* Abſolution, *&c.* If there be any of you which cannot quiet his own Conſcience, *&c.* I pray what Diſcreet man will take upon him to be his own *Prieſt* or *Confeſſor*? Or

think to satisfy his Conscience without the Sentence of *Absolution*?

Upon the whole matter, I only pray to be resolv'd this question, if a general *Confession* and *Absolution* be sufficient for Healthy sinners, why not for the Sick?

In the concerns of our Estate or Health, we are not usually satisfied with Generalities. A general Receipt from a *Physician*, or general Advice from a *Lawyer* will not serve our turn. And shall we take less care of our Souls? *Lawyers* tell us a a General Pardon is not good

good in Law, unleſs the particular Crimes be expreſs'd; and is there leſs need of exactneſs in *foro Conſciencia*.

To conclude, if men will ſtill conſult the World and the Fleſh, and not the things which belong to their Eternal Happineſs, I cannot help it. I am ſatisfied, that the Devil (Envying the Salvation of Mankind,) finds it his Intereſt to ſuppreſs *Confeſſion* all he he can, that ſo ſecret and cunning ſinners may be left to Repent as they liſt themſelves.

If after all this, some In-devout person shall Reply, This tends to advance the Intereſt of the *Clergy*. 'Tis very true, it designs to advance the Eternal Intereſt of both *Clergy* and *Laity*: *Clergymen* themselves being no more excus'd from this Duty, than the *Laity*.

---

# *A Form of* Confeſſion *out of ſeveral Authors, chiefly the worthy Dr.* Sherlock *Rector of* Winwick.

*DEarly beloved* (ſaith Saint *Paul*) *let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of the Fleſh and Spirit.*

Of doing this there is no other way but by unfeign'd *Contrition* and *Confeſſion* of our ſins. For the right performance therefore of a Duty of ſo vaſt importance, two things

things are to be advis'd;

First, That in Confeſſing our ſins, we do not truſt to our *Extempore* Expreſſions, nor inconſiderately ſay whatever at preſent comes into our Minds.

II. That it be done by the Rule of Gods Commandments, as the *Church* of *England* preſcribes.

I have here ſet down a form of *Confeſſion*, whereunto every ſinner may add or diminiſh, as he finds himſelf more or leſs guilty.

*I am the Lord thy God, thou ſhalt have none other Gods but me.*

Re-

Remember Almighty God is to be ſerv'd with thoſe three Virtues, *Faith*, *Hope* and *Love*; and Therefore let the ſinner accuſe himſelf firſt concerning his *Faith*, if he have given entertainment to any doubt concerning the Being of God and his Providence; and how long?

I have ſo unſtedfaſtly + believ'd in God, that I have ſometimes entertain'd Atheiſtical and ſuſpicious Thoughts concerning all Religion.

I have doubted or diſputed the Articles of my *Ceerd* to gratifie the petulancy

tuancy of my own Reason, instead of humbly acquiessing in the Faith of the *Catholick Church.*

I have lean'd to my own Opinion, which I have mistaken for Conscience; cutting my self off from the Community of the Church, to follow the Dictates of my own Reason.

In matters relating to my Temporal Interest, I have been diffident of my own Council, whilst in matters of Faith, not so obvious to humane sense or understanding, I have thought it my wisest course to trust to my own Opinion.

I have done many things without any fear of God, particularly at ſuch and ſuch a time; I have done thus and thus, as if there had been no God to call me to an account.

I have not been conſtant and careful every day to recommend my ſelf to the Protection of God; but have been glad of little occaſions to put off my Prayers till another time.

I have been little better than one of thoſe *Atheiſts* who profeſs to know God, but in their Actions deny him; being

ing disobedient, and to every good work Reprobate.

*God be Merciful to me a Sinner.*

I have sinned against *Hope* in God by trusting in my own Wit, Policy or Money.

I have been often distracted with Fears, and Apprehensions about the things of this Life: And have taken Indirect courses for the compassing my Secular ends.

I have given credit to Divinations or Sorceries for the finding out of Stollen Goods.

I have consulted Witches or Gypsies about Fortune, believing what they told me. I have been puffed up by Prosperity, and cast down by Adversity.

I have sinned against the fear of God, by refraining from my Vices in the Presence of Men, but not in the Presence of the All-seeing God; apprehending the danger of humane cognizance more than the Displeasure of Almighty God.

*God be Merciful to my Sin, for it is great.*

I have sinned against the *Love* of God, by lov-

ing

ing my Self, and my own wretched Intereſt, above all things.

I have gone to the Houſe of God, more out of reſpect to my Reputation, than Love or Gratitude to him.

I have been a Lover of my own Senſualities more than a Lover of God.

I have not taken half ſo much delight in my Prayers as in my Divertiſements of Buſineſs; In Reading Books of Devotion, as in *Romances* or *Comedies*.

I have often forgot my Prayers, caring little for thoſe Pleaſures which are

at

at the Right Hand of God; but my Soul cleaveth to the Duſt, and Rubbiſh of this World.

I have been too raſh in offering my own *Extempore* Petitions to God, which I would not offer to any Great Man upon Earth, making more bold with the Majeſty of God than with that of a Mortal Prince, as if more reſpect or diſtance were to be obſerv'd towards Man than God.

I have Miſ-conſtru'd the Scriptures, and particularly Saint *Paul*'s Epiſtles concerning the matter of Adoption, *Fi-*

*lial* reſpect towards God.

All which I have done, not as became a true Servant of that God who has been ſo gracious to me.

*God be Merciful to me a Sinner.*

II. Commandment, *Thou ſhalt not make to thy ſelf any Graven Image*, &c.

I have through Ignorance of this *Commandment* been an Enemy to all External Ceremonies in the Houſe of God, as bowing at the Bleſſed Name of Jeſus, receiving the Sacrament, with reſpect on our Knees, *&c.*

cal-

ling many things Impiously by the name of Superstition, whilst I understood not the Scriptural and true meaning of that word.

I have called it no less than Idolatry, the giving any respect to a Crucifix, or Picture of my Saviour, *Whilst I made a God of my self, or of my Interest*, which the Scripture calls Idolatry, *Coll.* 3. 5.

I have exclaim'd against Idolatry, whilst I made no Conscience of Sacriledge, or usurping the Means of the Church.

I have never served God with that humble,

low proſtration of Body, nor yet with that intenſe of Devotion of Soul as I ought.

*God be merciful to me a Sinner.*

III. Commandment, *Thou ſhalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain.*

I have been a cuſtomary vain Swearer in my Ordinary Converſe, without any regard to the Tremendous Name of God, which is only to be mention'd with Adoration and Bleſſing.

I have Sworn falſly, knowing it to be falſe, and

and ſometimes I have Sworn in my doubtfulneſs or uncertainty of the matter, whether true or falſe.

I have given my Promiſſary Oath without any intention or care to perform the ſame.

I have Sworn Innocent Perſons out of their Livelihoods or Eſtates, to ſerve my Malice or Intereſt.

I have taken Covenants or Engagements impos'd on me by Rebellious and Uſurp'd Powers.

But chiefly I have forgotten the Covenant which I made with God

in

in my *Baptiſm*; nor minded thoſe committed to my Charge, of their Obligation to perform the ſame.

I have been accuſtomed to Bann or Curſe my ſelf or my Neighbours; and have heard the Name of God Blaſpem'd, without reproving the Parties.

I have neglected to Correct my Servants or children for lightly uſiing the Name of God.

I have Suborn'd Witneſſes to Perjure themſelves for my Intereſt.

I have not been ſo ſenſible as I ought of the Perjuries of theſe Nations.

Mul-

Multitudes Swearing *Pro* and *Con* to matters which they have never underſtood nor conſider'd

I have received the Sacrament of Chriſt's Body and Blood, with Promiſes and Reſolutions of Amendment, and have broken them all.

IV. Commandment, *Remember that thou keep Holy the* Sabbath day.

I have often neglected going to the Houſe of God, and as often behaved my ſelf Indevoutly and Irreverently there.

Inſtead of minding the Service of God, my Thoughts

Thoughts have run upon my Pleaſures, or Secular Buſineſs.

+ I have gone to the Houſe of God without any Previous Reflections on my Sins, or ill Life, and rather to ſatisfie my Curioſity of hearing the Sermon, than to Praiſe God, or Confeſs my Sins.

+ I have ſpent the *Sunday* or *Holy-day* in the *Tavern* or *Ale-Houſe*, or at Home I have paſs'd the day in Luxury or Vanity.

I have pretended Scruples of Conſcience to abſent my ſelf from the Service of God, or from the Sacrament, when the true

cauſe

cauſe has been want of Devotion in my heart.

I have ſometimes confeſs'd my ſins, and return'd to them again. I have never fully reſolv'd to amend my life, or I have receiv'd the *Holy Sacrament* without any previous Confeſſion of ſins to my Lawful Paſtors according to the advice of the Church-Exhortation before the *Communion*.

The Inclinations and Affections of my Soul are ſet upon things on Earth, and not upon things in Heaven.

*God be merciful to me a Sinner.*

Likewiſe againſt the Second Table I have Sinned, *Not ſo loving my Neighbour as my ſelf*, That I have ſeldom thought of doing to others as I would have them do unto me.

I have never regarded any man further than I thought him in ſome meaſure capable to ſerve or to hurt me in the mat- of my Intereſt.

V. Commandment.

*Honour thy Father and thy Mother*, &c.

I have been ſtubborn and diſobedient towards my Natural Parents, or not

not ſo reſpectful as I ought.

I have deſpis'd them in my heart, or openly revil'd them.

I have thought my ſelf too Good to own them, or too wiſe to take notice of their Advice.

I have not to the beſt of my Power Comforted or Reliev'd them in their Wants or Weakneſſes.

I have often wiſh'd for their Death that I might enjoy their Eſtate, and follow the deſires of my own Heart.

Againſt the King and Royal Family I have been Seditious and Male-

pert in my Thoughts and Words.

I have taken Pleaſure in Reading Libels againſt his Perſon or Government; or murmur'd to pay him Tribute.

I have Promoted or Abetted Deſigns for Diſinheriting the Rightful Heir to the Crown; and extinguiſhing the Monarchy of theſe Nations; pretending Religion, whilſt the true reaſons were the Pride, Envy and Sedition of my own Heart.

I had too great a Hand in the Rebellion againſt King *Charles* the Firſt of

Bleſſed

Bleſſed Memory, by Preaching it up under the pretext of Reformation, to the ruine of many Thouſand Families, and the loſs of one hundred thouſand Lives; the voice of whoſe Blood juſtly cryes to Heaven againſt me. This O God I confeſs and bewail, the remembrance of it is grievous unto me.

*Have mercy upon me.*

As for my Spiritual Parents the Paſtors of the Church, I have thought my own reaſon wiſer than all their Laws or *Canons.*

I never regarded my Saviours words, *He that will not hear the Church, let him be to thee an Heathen and a Publican.*

I have disdain'd my own *Priest* or *Pastor*, and left my Parish Church, to please My Itching Ears with the new Phrases of *Schismatical* and Un-authoriz'd Preachers.

I have detain'd, or grudgingly paid the Dues of the Church.

I have hardned my Heart and refus'd to turn from the Errours of my ways.

Towards all my Superiours I have been stubborn

born and perverſe.

Towards my Inferiours, my Servants and others, I muſt confeſs I have been Vain and Peeviſh, Impatient and Domineering, as if nothing but my own Excellencies had diſtinguiſh'd me from other Mortals.

I have turn'd away my Servants upon every ſlight miſdemeanor; forgetting that I muſt one day render an account of my own Actions.

I have neglected the Inſtructions of my Servants, preferring their Attendance on my buſineſs, before the great

concern of their Salvation.

I have often detain'd or curtail'd their Wages, provok'd their Spirits, exacted too hard Duty from them, and too ſupercilioufly lorded it over them.

For the Duty of Servants towards their Maſters, I have often neglected it, or perform'd it with Eye-ſervice.

I have been neither Juſt nor Honeſt, nor ſo careful of my Buſineſs as became a good Servant, or a good Chriſtian.

For the Duty of Husbands towards their Wives,

Wives, I have ill treated my Wife in Words or Deeds, and been bitter againſt her upon every little Accident, or I have been jealous without evident cauſe.

I have provok'd my Husbands Anger by my vain Carriage or Undutiful Words, far from that Love, Honour or Obedience which I Promiſed.

In a word, I have had very little regard to the *Fifth Commandment*. I have Murmur'd againſt all men in Authority, and put Siniſter Interpretations upon all their Actions.

*God be merciful to me a ſinner.*

IV.

## VI. Commandment.

*Thou ſhalt not Kill.*

— I have Murder'd my Adverſary with my Heart and Tongue, though not with my Hands. I have Cheriſh'd all the Seeds of Murder in my Heart, as Anger, Hatred, Envy, Malice, Uncharitableneſs, *&c.*

— I have been frequently Guilty of Immoderate Anger, Peeviſh and diſquieted at Trifles and little Miſcarriages of others. My Anger hath ſwell'd into ſuch wrath and fury.

— I have been mindful of Wrongs, and forgetful of

of Benefits. Going to Law more out of Malice then Matter, more out of Pride or Revenge, than for Righteouſneſs ſake.

I have Envy'd the Eſtates or Fortunes of others, their Parts or Endowments, Credit or Eſteem.

I have purſu'd my Worldly Intereſts to the ruine or Death of others.

I have been Unmerciful in not relieving the Neceſſities of the Poor and Indigent, of the Sick and in Priſon.

I have too much contributed to the ruine of other Peoples Souls by my

my ill Example, or vile Behaviour; by tempting or alluring them to Drunkeneſs or Unchaſtity, by conſenting to, or not reproving their Vices; or by not admoniſhing them as opportunity offer'd, or my Duty requir'd.

I have delighted to hear of the Diſgrace, Loſs or Death of others.

I have been extreamly wanting in all kinds of Chriſtian Charity, whether Corporal or Spiritual.

I have Cheriſh'd an ill Temper of Mind, far from that Gentleneſs, Meek-

Meekneſs or Goodneſs which becomes a true Diſciple of Chriſt my Saviour. So far have I been from loving my Neighbour as my Self, that I have not lov'd my ſelf aright, but taken the ready way to deſtroy my Self by Intemperance of Drinking, by Incontinence or Laſciviouſneſs, or over-much ſollicitude for the Periſhing things of this World, or for want of Prudence in the ſuppreſſion of my unruly Paſſions and Deſires.

VII. Commandment.

*Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery.*

I

+ I have ſeldom reſiſted, and very often conſented to the Temptations of the Fleſh.

+ I have entertain'd Idle and Unchaſte Thoughts, which I did not forthwith caſt out of my Heart, but ſuffer'd them to dwell there till they grew up into Wicked and Abominable Deſigns.

+ I have Sollicited or Tempted others to Sin, by Diſhoneſt Words, Letters or Gifts.

I have made it my Buſineſs to Corrupt my Neighbours Husband.

+ I have not Mortified my Body by Abſtinence, ma-

making no Conſcience of the Days Antiently obſerv'd by the Church.

I have not ſhun'd the occaſions of this ſin, but have fomented my Luſts by making Proviſion for them.

I have taken all opportunities to inflame my Rebellious Appetite, by Drink or Idle Company, whereby my Heart hath been eſtranged from thee O God.

I have been too Coſtly or vain in my Apparel, to intice the Eyes of Lovers, or to gain an empty reſpect from the World.

*God be Merciful to me a Sinner.*

VIII.

## VIII. Commandment.

*Thou ſhalt not Steal.*

I have been deceitful in Buying and Selling. I have Purloined other mens Goods or Money, which I have never yet reſtored nor given ſatisfaction for.

I have Out-witted or Over-reach'd ſuch as have dealt with me.

I have Bought Stollen Goods, knowing them to be ſuch, and have detain'd what I knew of right belonged to others.

I have with-held the Wages due unto my Servants or Workmen.

I have borrow'd without care of Paying again, or upon other mens Security to leave them in the Lurch.

I have taken Usury without any mercy, or consideration of the inevitable Chances which happen'd to my Debtors.

When the Poor or distress'd have called to me for Relief, I have turn'd the Deaf-Ear, and given them harsh Language instead of an Alms.

I have not been so Merciful to the Afflicted as my Ability and their sad condition did require.

I could find Money to ſpend upon my own needleſs Pleaſures, but none to relieve the wanting and and neceſſitous People. I have conſum'd that Eſtate by Gaming, Drinking, &c. whereby I might have done good to others. *Deal not with me, O God, after my Sins.*

IX. Commandment.

*Thou ſhalt not bear falſe againſt thy Neighbour.*

I have not been careful to ſpeak the Truth at all times, but have ſuffered my Tongue to be the inſtrument of manifold Lyes, as Officious Lyes, Flat-

Flattering Lyes, Diſſimulation, and profeſſing more kindneſs to ſuch and ſuch, than has been in my Heart towards them.

I have Accus'd others, and teſtified againſt them out of Envy, Hatred or Malice.

I have lov'd to ſpeak words that might do hurt to my Neighbour. I have been too apt to receive and ſpread ill Reports, not caring whether True or Falſe.

I have talk'd of the Mote in my Brothers Eye to his Diſparagement, but could not ſee

my own Infinite Defects. *Enter not in Judgement with thy Servant, O Lord.*

X. Commandment.

*Thou ſhalt not covet thy Neighbours Houſe, thou ſhalt not covet,* &c.

I have ſinfully coveted other mens Goods or Eſtates, Wives or Servants, Envying their Condition, and diſſatisfied with my own.

I have Food and Raiment, but no Content.

Thus I have ſinned and done wickedly by Tranſgreſſing Gods moſt Righteous Laws. My ſecret ſins

ſins are innumerable, ſins ſecret to the World, committed before thee O God, and under the witneſs of my own Conſcience.

I am confounded with the multitude of them, the remembrance is grievous unto me, the burden of them is intollerable.

Have Mercy upon me, O God, for thy Son our Lord Jeſus Chriſt's ſake, ſtrengthen me in all Goodneſs, and bring me to Everlaſting Life.

Thus if we confeſs our ſins, God is Faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins; Faithful and juſt to what?

Even

Even to his own Promiſe, which he hath thrice repeated in the Goſpel, *Whoſoever ſins ye remit, they are remitted unto them*, &c.

*He that Confeſſeth and Forſaketh his ſins ſhall find Mercy.*

---

## *An Appendix concerning Lawful* Paſtors.

I Hope the *Reader*, after ſerious conſideration of the Premiſſes, will acknowledge it a matter highly expedient if not neceſſary, to conſult his Lawful *Paſtors*; unleſs he would be left to himſelf in the great concern of Salvation. But who are Lawful *Paſtors*, and who not, is the unhappy controverſy; about which the *Reader* perhaps may expect I ſhould ſay ſomewhat.

*Believe not every Spirit* (ſaith

(ſaith St. *John*) *becauſe many falſe Prophets are gone out into the World: Alſo of your own ſelves ſhall men ariſe, ſpeaking perverſe things* (ſaith S. *Paul*) *to draw away Diſciples after them. Of this ſort are they which creep into Houſes and lead captive ſilly Women*, 2 Tim. 3. 6.

Why ſo many cautions about Falſe Miniſters? might every man, who thinks himſelf Gifted, take upon him to be the *Paſtor* of our Souls?

Among other marks therefore which the Scripture give us whereby to know a Falſe Miniſter, this

this is one, *viz.* want of *Miſſion.* For as it is proper for all true Miniſters not to preſume to Preach before they be ſent; ſo it is for all Falſe Miniſters to run before they be ſent, and to Preach their own Opinions without Authority. Who are therefore ſaid in Scripture, to come, but never to be ſent: *All they* (ſaith our Bleſſed Saviour) *who came before me are Thieves and Robbers*; that is, All who came of their own Heads un-ſent and un-commanded; arrogating that Licenſe to Themſelves, which God never gave them, abuſing

the Name of God, and crying, thus ſaith the Lord, when he never ſaid ſo, nor meant ſo. This then is apparent, that *lawful Miſſion* is Eſſential to a *True Paſtor*, which *Calvin* himſelf (I wonder at it) confeſſes, and gives this reaſon for it, *viz. Ne homines inquieti ac turbulenti temerè ſe ad docendum vel regendum ingerant: Leaſt* Factious *and* Seditious *men ſhould intrude themſelves into the Holy Function*, Inſt. lib. 4. cap. 3. Sect. 10. 14.

The reaſon is good, for take away the neceſſity of *Miſſion*, and you open a gap

gap for all Impoſtures and all confuſion to enter into the Church, as our eyes have ſeen.

He therefore, that would underſtand the Foundation of Religion, eſpecially in relation to *Diſſenters*, let him reduce the Controverſy to this narrow point: Waving the Queſtion about *Ordination*, whether *Presbyterian* Orders may be valid or no? And ſuppoſing, but not granting, that *Diſſenting Preachers* were true *Presbyters*: The ſhort *Quæry* is, who did Authorize *Calvin*, *Knox* or their Followers to

Preach the Antient *Liturgy* of the Church?

It is vain to reaſon with them upon any other *Topick* than that of their *Miſſion*; For if that be not queſtioned, they will have ſpecial things enough to alledge in their own Defence.

Some body muſt ſend them by an Ordinary or Extraordinary Commiſſion, or they muſt run of their own Heads: *For he that enters not by the door,* (of an Ordinary or Extraordinary Commiſſion) *the ſame is a Thief and a Robber*, ſaith our Bleſſed Saviour. *Fur & latro*

*latro eſt qui à nemine miſſus niſi à ſeipſo*, ſaid St. *Cyprian*: *He enters not by the door as Honeſt men do, but ſeeks Windows, Corners, or by ways of his own*: As if the Divine Providence were wanting, (when neceſſity requires) to ſend Preachers into the Church, or to furniſh them with ſufficient *Credentials*, ſo as to leave us without excuſe. *Did not the Hand of God ſtrike* Uzzah *with ſuddain Death for putting forth his Hand uncommanded to ſupport the Ark from falling?* 2 Sam. 6. *and King* Uzziah *with a* Leproſie *to the day of his*

*Death, for preſuming to offer* Incenſe, *which appertain'd to the Prieſts alone?* 2 Chron. 26. 19. Are not theſe things written for our Inſtruction?

If then *Calvin, Knox*, &c. Preach'd by virtue of their extraordinary Gifts, we deſire ſome evidence of it beyond the Parts of *Luther, Zwinglius, Socinus*, and other Reformers: If by an Ordinary Commiſſion, we deſire to know the expreſs words thereof, together with the Name of that Biſhop or Biſhops from whom they received it. Were they *Roman Catholick* Biſhops?

All

All the World knows, they give no Commiſſion to Preach any other Doctrine or Diſcipline, then that of their own Church; no more do the Biſhops of the Church of *England*.

This *Quæry*, who ſent them, hath been often asked but never anſwered; nor indeed can a *Preſbyterian* contrive any Anſwer for himſelf, but the *Independant*, *Socinian*, and *Anabaptiſt* Preachers will give the ſame for themſelves.

Will he pretend neceſſity? They alſo will tell him, *Woe be to Them if*

*they Preach not the Goſpel.* Will he be try'd by the Scriptures? *They deſire nothing more.* Did he receive his Call from the People? *Their Muſters will exceed his.* Although the Peoples Call without a Commiſſion from God, or his Church, could never yet Authorize a Preacher of the Goſpel; our Bleſſed Saviour and his Apoſtles (who are our Patterns) having never receiv'd any Call from the People, nor ever expected any.

To ſay he Preaches nothing but Scripture, is not only the matter in Queſtion,

ſtion, but is an Anſwer wholly Impertinent; the *Quary* being, who gave him *Commiſſion* to Preach and Divulge his own Interpretation of Scripture?

Well, there is only one evaſion left him, and that is to pretend a Commiſſion from the *Waldenſes*. But this will not do; for *Peter Waldo* a Merchant of *Lyons*, Founder of that Sect, ſtarting up about the Eleventh Century; The Queſtion remains ſtill, from whence had he his *Miſſion*? Beſides, that the Tenets of his Religion are not the ſame, but vaſtly diſagree-

ing

ing with thoſe of *Calvin*, *Knox*, &c. And we find *Calvin* himſelf in his Epiſtle to the King of *Poland*, dated *December* 14*th*. 1554. thus confeſſing the matter, *viz. Omnino extraordinarium fuit hoc munus quod Dominus nobis injunxit, dum opera noſtra ad colligendas Eccleſias uſus eſt*, &c. that is, *This Office which the Lord had enjoyn'd him for the gathering of new Churches, was wholly extraordinary.* See the Volumn of his Epiſtles Printed at *Geneva.*

The not conſidering this matter hath brought a world

world of Confuſion upon theſe Kingdoms; and till the People be made ſenſible of it, we are never like to ſee an end of our Religious Diſtractions.

'Tis remarkable how *Presbyterians* in the year 1641. Rebelling againſt the Eſtabliſh'd Church, and Preaching up their own Opinions without Authority, taught the *Independants* and other Sects the way to Supplant themſelves; Inſomuch, that about the year 1646. They and their *Covenant* began to be run down by the new Lights

ſprung

ſprung out of their own Bowels.

This brings to my remembrance a remarkable Letter of *Oliver Cromwel's* to the Miniſters of *Edinburgh*, dated *September* 1600. which you will find printed in *Whitlock's* Memorials of the late Times.

They had writ to him to Expoſtulate the Confidence of his Officers in taking upon them to be Preachers of the Goſpel; to which he Anſwers in theſe Words, *viz.*

*What is this, but to deny Chriſtians their Liberty, and to aſſume to your ſelves*

*ſelves the Infallible Chair? Where do you find in Scripture, that Preaching is included in your Function? Though a Commiſſion from men have Order in it, and may do well; but we hope he that aſcended up on high may give his Gifts to whom he pleaſes; And if ſuch Gifts be the Seal of* Miſſion, *be not Envious though* Eldad *and* Medad *Prophecy. Indeed you Erre through miſtake of the Scriptures; a Commiſsion from Men being an Act of Conveniency; but not of Neceſsity, to give faculty to Preach the Goſpel,* &c.

Theſe

These are his Words, I think, never to be answered by those *Kirkmen*, standing to their own Principles; For why might not his Officers (Gifted men) Preach and Pray without License from the *Presbyterians*, as well as the *Presbyterians* without Authority from the Old Establish'd Church?

If it be said, *Presbyterian Ministers* are men of Learning and Piety, and therefore not to be Interdicted: I answer, themselves do not allow every Learned and Pious man to Preach without License

cenſe ; and why ſhould the Eſtabliſh'd Church allow it, without Impoſition of the Hands of ſome Biſhop, who in a conſtant Succeſſion from the Apoſtles hath Authority to give it? Saint *Paul* himſelf (though Elected to the Apoſtleſhip by an immediate Call from Heaven) muſt not enter on his Office without Licenſe and Impoſition of the Hands of the Church.

But ſometimes they will anſwer, *That their Miniſters* (ſome of them) *did receive Orders from the Church of* England. If ſo, I demand, Was ſuch

ſuch Ordination good and valid, Yea or no? If good, by what Authority have they taken upon them to aboliſh it, together with the whole Order of Biſhops? If not valid, what will become of their Orders?

And then I pray them to ſatisfie us as to theſe few *Quæries.*

I. *Can an Honeſt man Preach againſt the* Order, Liturgy *or Conſtitution of any Church by Virtue of any Commiſſion he receiv'd from it? And whether ſuch Preacher be not lyable to the Cenſures of that Church?* II. *Can*

II. *Can a man turn* Independant *or* Anabaptist-*Preacher by virtue of the Ministry he receiv'd from the* Presbyterians ?

III. *If* Mission *be a Spiritual Power, whether* Temporal Magistrates *or* Senates *may confer the same ?*

IV. *Did ever any Church Authorize her* Priests, *or* Ministers *to go and Preach the Gospel after their own private Sense or Conscience in contradiction to her declar'd Doctrine or Discipline ?*

Perhaps you will anſwer, in caſe the Church be manifeſtly corrupted with Superſtition and Idolatry, why may not Able men Preach without any Commiſſion? Very good, *Cromwel*'s Officers deſir'd no more againſt the *Kirk*, as we ſhall ſee by and by manifeſtly corrupted. This is ſtill the matter in queſtion. What if the Church finds theſe men of Abilities manifeſtly Intoxicated with Miſtakes of Holy Scripture? With a Spirit of Perverſeneſs, and a deſire of Change? Or perhaps an Evil-Eye at

the

the Means of the Church? What is to be done in this Caſe? The Scripture you will ſay muſt determine the matter. This is the Anſwer of all Factious, and Parties of what Name ſoever. The Scripture admits of various Conſtructions; and I would fain know what Party ſhall ever be Convict, that muſt be tryed by a Law whereof themſelves muſt be Interpreters?

Now as for Preaching without a Commiſſion, in caſe of a corrupted Church, let us ſee what Opinion the *Cromwellian*

and *Independant* Preachers had of the *Presbyterian Reformation.*

About the year 1647. the *Presbyterian* Ministers of *Lancashire* complain'd to the *Parliament*, *How the* Independants *and other Sects had compared the* Covenant *to the* Alcoran *of the* Turks, *the* Mass *of the* Papists, *and* Service-Book *of the* Prelates. *And how they said it was a* Brazen Serpent *fit to be broken in pieces, and ground to Powder, rather then men should fall down, and Worship it,* Harm. Consent. *pag.* 20.

Mr.

Mr. *Dell* an *Independant* Minister calls *Presbytery*, *A new Form of that* Mystery of Iniquity, *which had been so long in working*. Epistle before his Sermon of *Right Reformation*, Preach'd to the *Rump Parliament*.

Mr. *Feak* a *Fifth Monarchy* Preacher, called the *Covenant*, *The great* Idol *of the two Kingdoms*.

*You shall find the same spirit of* Tyranny *in the Perfum'd Bed of the* Presbytery, *which lay in the Polluted Bed of the* Papacy, said Mr. *Sterry Cromwel's* Chaplain, Epistle before his *Thanksgiving* Ser-

*Sermon* for the Victory at *Worcester*.

The *Presbyterians* (said *Hugh Peters* in a Pamphlet of his) *are no other then* Gibeonites, *who might help to Hew Stones, and Square Timber for a more Glorious* Reformation.

*The* Assembly of Divines (said another) *have two Horns like a* Ram, *but a Mouth like a* Dragon.

Mr. *Burton* an *Independent Preacher*, bestow'd this Character on *Presbyterian Government*, *That it would bring us under perpetual Slavery, worse then either* Egypt *or* Babylon

bylon, Dialogue called *Conformity, Deformity.*

*Uniformity* was Stiled the *Burden of the Saints, the Bondage of the Church and the limiting of Christ.*

Thus we see no end of *Reformation*, no Stability of a Church or State, the necessity of a *Commission* being dispens'd with.

---

FINIS.